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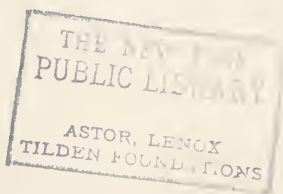
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R. Rackway



# FIFTY YEARS IN JOURNALISM

EMBRACING

RECOLLECTIONS AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

WITH AN

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

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BY BEMAN BROCKWAY

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WATERTOWN, N. Y.

DAILY TIMES PRINTING AND PUBLISHING HOUSE

1891

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### EXPLANATORY.

The following articles have appeared in the Times and Reformer at intervals during the past seven years, under the heading, "Rummaging in the Past." They are now published in this form to oblige those who have requested that this be done. Some expressions may be found which seem out of place in a book; but if it be borne in mind that the articles were written for the columns of a daily newspaper, with no idea at the time of writing of publishing them in other form, all seemingly out of place matter will be accounted for. It should further be stated that, owing to the failure of his eyesight, the writer has been unable to read the proof sheets. For that reason, he desires the reader to overlook typographical and other unimportant errors that may have crept into the volume. He has simply labored to be right in the statement of facts.



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**APOLOGETIC.** . . . . .

**AUTOBIOGRAPHY.** . . . . .

# FIFTY YEARS IN JOURNALISM.

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## CHAPTER I.

Congressmen and Legislators in 1834—Attempt on President Jackson's Life—Van Buren Nominated for President—William L. Marcy Governor.

The senior proprietor of the Watertown Times has been engaged in furnishing the public with news matter for a period of more than fifty years, as he commenced newspaper work in December, 1834. For a good share of all this time he has been an active politician, attended hundreds of conventions, in numerous cases as a delegate, and made the acquaintance of thousands of men who have been engaged in conducting the affairs of the state and nation. Until the organization of the republican party he was a democrat, and personally knew great numbers of the leading democrats in this state. When the party got by the ears and separated, in 1847-8, he went with the barnburners; and so, when the republican party was formed, fell into it very naturally, as did most of the politicians answering to that name. They were anti-slavery men, and were ready to co-operate with whigs and others who agreed with them upon that question. The republican party was made up of old abolitionists, anti-slavery democrats and anti-slavery whigs. They agreed upon this one point, that slavery should not be extended. They were also a unit in opposition to Mormonism, denouncing that and slavery as "twin relics of barbarism."

On other questions, such as the tariff, finance, and internal improvements by the general government, republicans entertained various opinions, as might be supposed, having been brought up in different political schools. It has been stated that the responsible editor of the Times has always been a democrat. He was a democrat while acting with the democratic party, but he has likewise been an earnest and consistent republican from the day of that party's organization, and believes he is and has been as loyal to the principles on which it was founded as any man in it.

In uniting with this organization he formed new associations and came in contact with a new class of men ; so he has enjoyed unusual opportunities for becoming acquainted with the public men of the states, representing the different political parties, and he judges that some notes, embracing his recollections of the men and occurrences of his time, may not be devoid of interest. To that end he will, as leisure permits, give some chapters from his recollection and from records he has preserved. He will commence where he commenced journalism, with the close of the year 1834 :

At that date the national house of representatives consisted of 240 members. Of these, forty-three were from the state of New York. Among them, chosen at the election in 1834, were C. C. Cambreleng, the statesman and polished gentleman from Long Island ; John McKeon, late district attorney of New York ; Eli Moore, a journeyman printer, if I remember right, and one of the most eloquent men ever in the house ; Gideon Lee, a leather merchant in New York ; Aaron Ward, a distinguished name in the same city ; Aaron Vanderpool, of Kinderhook ; John Cramer, an old democratic war-horse from Saratoga ; Ransom H. Gillette, of St. Lawrence ; Abijah Mann, Jr., of Herkimer ; Samuel Beardsley, of Oneida ; Joel Turrill, of Oswego ; Daniel Wardwell, of

Jefferson ; Ulysses F. Doubleday, a leading editor in Auburn ; Francis Granger, of Ontario ; Abner Hazeltine, of Chautauqua ; Thomas C. Love, of Buffalo, and John Young, of Livingston, afterwards governor. Most of these gentlemen were men of mark.

In the state legislature, chosen in 1834, were the names of Robert Lansing, John G. Stower, Francis Seger, and Abijah Beckwith, who represented the fifth district in the senate, embracing the county of Jefferson.

In the assembly, Jefferson was represented by Calvin Clark, of Belleville, Eli Farwell, of Watertown, and Charles Strong, of Carthage. Lewis was represented by Charles Dayan ; St. Lawrence by Preston King and William S. Paddock ; Oswego by Jesse Crowell.

It will be noticed that Oswego county at that time had but one member of assembly, that St. Lawrence had only two, while Jefferson had three.

William L. Marcy was governor of the state, having been chosen at the annual election held in that year. William H. Seward ran against him, and was beaten by a few thousand votes.

On the 30th of January, 1835, an attempt was made to assassinate President Jackson. The occurrence in no respect differed from the assault on Mr. Lincoln in 1865, or the one upon Mr. Garfield in 1881, except that in these last cases the shot proved fatal, while the pistol aimed at General Jackson missed fire. The attempted assassination of General Jackson produced great excitement throughout the country, but, as the president escaped injury, it soon subsided. The facts in the case, as related in the newspapers at the time, were, that while the members of congress were engaged in attending the funeral of Warren R. Davis, of South Carolina, the life of President Jackson was attempted by a man named Lawrence. The president, accompanied by several members of the cabinet, had advanced from the rotunda to the eastern



portico of the capitol, when Lawrence, within five feet of the president, deliberately aimed a loaded pistol at his person, but it snapped without discharging the contents. He forthwith aimed another pistol, but with the same result. The president, upon hearing the first click of the lock, turned and raised his cane as the second attempt was made, and, advancing towards him, exclaimed, "Stand aside, and he shall never be permitted to fire another pistol!" The president did not reach him before others had thrown the assassin down.

Lawrence was arrested and put in jail. He was an Englishman by birth, and was evidently a sort of crank. He was examined by a commission of lunacy, who reported the details of an interview held with him, without expressing any opinion as to his sanity. What became of the fellow I do not recollect. Probably, however, he was sent to some asylum.

At this period Silas Wright, Jr., and Nathaniel P. Tallmadge represented this state in the United States senate.

On the 20th of May, 1835, Martin Van Buren was nominated for president, and Richard M. Johnson for vice president. It was at this convention, if I am not mistaken, that the two-thirds rule was adopted. To the election of this ticket there was no organized opposition. General Harrison received the next greatest number of votes.



## CHAPTER II.

The Great Fire in New York—Heavy Snow Storm in Winter of 1836—  
New York an Entire Day without Mails—Utica and Schenectady Con-  
nected by Rail—Political—Judge Seger of Lewis.

There was a tremendous conflagration in New York December 16, 1835, which swept the buildings from more than fifty-two acres, numbering between six and seven hundred, situated in the heart of the business part of the city, and consuming property estimated at from fifteen to thirty million dollars. The old exchange was burned, with the postoffice and the establishments of five daily papers—the Journal of Commerce, the Gazette, Daily Advertiser, the Times and the American.

The boundaries of destruction were: Wall street, except five houses on the southwest corner of Pearl; William street on both sides from Wall to Pearl, except the building on the west corner of Wall. The fire extended west from William street to Exchange, to the South Dutch church on one side, and through the whole row of white stores on the other side. Beaver street was burned on both sides about half way from William to Broad. On Pearl street the fire ran from Wall street to Coenties alley, opposite to Coenties slip, where it was stopped by the use of gunpowder. From this point to the river the side of Coenties slip was the boundary. All the buildings on that side were down, except both corners of Front and the blocks between Front and South streets. Not a building of any description escaped.

This was said to be a tolerably accurate list of the houses and stores destroyed: 102 on Water street; 79 on Pearl; 3 on South; 80 on Front; 16 on Hanover; 62

on Exchange place, and 31 on Exchange street ; 44 on William ; 33 on Old slip ; 16 on Coenties slip ; 60 on Stone street ; 3 on Hanover square ; 23 on Beaver street ; 20 on Governor's lane ; 10 on Jones' lane ; 20 on Cuyler's alley ; 38 on Mill street—674 in all.

All business for a time was nearly suspended.

The night was intensely cold, and the hose so badly frozen that it was almost useless, so the raging element was permitted to roll on unobstructed until it had gained such power that resistance, for the time being, became entirely useless. Few accidents were reported, and only one or two lives lost.

Serious as was this conflagration, it was a trifling affair compared with the great Chicago fire of 1871 or the Boston fire in 1872, in which property was destroyed aggregating more than two hundred and fifty millions. In these days it isn't much of a fire in New York that does not consume property amounting to several millions.

A two hundred million fire in New York fifty years ago would have cleaned out the city utterly.

Utica and Schenectady were connected by rail the last of July, 1836. The contracts for the construction of the road were let in October, 1834. William C. Young was the engineer, and was afterward superintendent of the road. Mr. Young's estimate of the cost of the work was \$1,500,000, and though the right of way cost more than the estimate, the work was completed within the original estimate.

The reader will understand that the rail used bore little resemblance to that in use to-day. Square timbers were laid upon the ties, and straps of wrought iron, something like the tires upon a cart wheel, were spiked to the timber. This did very well for a while, but in time the spikes worked loose, and the ends of the iron rail would rise up from the timber. Sometimes they left the timbers very suddenly and forced their way through

the bottom of the car. These uprisings were called "snake-heads." I do not remember that any one was ever killed by them, but there were many narrow escapes, and riding upon this sort of roads became very hazardous, and the heavy T rail was substituted. This was about the first improvement in the way of railroad construction.

The road from Albany to Schenectady cost upwards of \$68,000 per mile. The one from Schenectady to Utica cost \$20,000 per mile.

Those on board the first train from Schenectady west were Erastus Corning, Lewis Benedict, Gideon Hawley, L. Townsend, J. Rathbone, James Savage, of Albany; Messrs. De Graff, Paige, Craig, Sprague, Palmer and Yates, of Schenectady—(Schenectady was then nearly half as large as Albany)—Mr. Laurie of New York, Marvin of Saratoga and Pomeroy of Pittsfield, Mass., with a representative of the Albany Evening Journal—seven-teen in all. The Journal reporter, in giving an account of the trip, says:

"After passing moderately through the city (Schenectady) and over the company's splendid bridge, the locomotive was put to its speed, and we were whirled through the delightful valley of the Mohawk at the rate of from 23 to 25 miles per hour. The scene was grand and beautiful beyond description. The rapidity with which we traveled gave to all around us a panoramic appearance. This valley, always the richest of the rich in its agricultural products, was now seen in its most gladsome and joyous aspect.

\* \* \* \*

"On one hand was the turnpike, where the stages of Messrs. Thorp & Sprague, once the swiftest messenger of which we could boast, now seemed, in the comparison, to stand still. On the other was the canal, filled with boats, 'dragging their slow length along.' These contrasts most forcibly illustrated the superiority of railroads as a mode of conveyance for passengers."

The train started at 6:15 A. M. from Schenectady, and arrived in Utica at 10:30. The writer says:

"At four o'clock we were in Albany, and at half-past ten in Utica! Truly this is the age of improvement.

"After receiving and returning the congratulations of our friends at Utica, the party partook of an early dinner at Baggs', (the same kept by our friend

Proctor,) and at one o'clock P. M. resumed our seats in the cars, and, in the presence of admiring spectators, departed for Schenectady, where we arrived a few minutes past five P. M., having been absent eleven hours, two hours and a half of which were passed in Utica, and one hour and a half consumed in stoppages.

"In going up, the time from Schenectady to Utica was 4 hours 21 minutes; time in running, 3 hours and 28 minutes.

"In returning, the whole time was 4 hours 9 minutes; stoppages 36 minutes; time in running 3 hours 38 minutes.

"So that, in going and returning, the locomotive performed ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY MILES IN SEVEN HOURS AND SIX MINUTES.

"Taking an extra car from Schenectady, we arrived at Albany a few minutes past seven o'clock, having breakfasted at Schenectady, dined at Utica, drank our tea at Albany—192 miles by daylight."

On the 14th October, 1835, the writer was a delegate to a "republican young men's county convention," and on the committee to report resolutions "expressive of the sense of the convention." There were sixteen of them. One endorsed Gen. Jackson, another Martin Van Buren, another Richard M. Johnson, others the different local nominees. On national questions, the convention expressed itself thus:

"That we are opposed to the high protective tariff and internal improvement systems of our opponents; that we discard and condemn their principle that 'the representative ought not to be palsied by the will of his constituents,' and that the establishment of a national bank, under any form whatever, is dangerous to the liberties of the people, and in derogation of the letter and spirit of our constitution.

"*Resolved*, That we deem the preservation of the Union of incalculable importance, and that we look upon him who advocates or knowingly does any act which has a tendency to disunion as recreant to the well-being of his country and regardless of the best interests of posterity."

Other resolutions condemned the abolitionists; also the efforts of the opposition to coalesce for the purpose of defeating the then republican party, insisting that their action was in utter disregard of the great fundamental principles on which parties ought to be founded, to wit: to "carry out certain measures in public affairs."

The senators representing this (fifth) district in 1836 were David Wager of Oneida, Francis Seger of Lewis,

Abijah Beckwith of Herkimer, and Micah Sterling of Jefferson.

I knew only one of these gentlemen, Judge Seger, who was clerk of the assembly for six successive years, beginning with 1828, state senator four years, commencing with 1834, and secretary of the constitutional convention of 1846. The judge was a thorough gentleman, polished in his manners, and, though a very decided democrat, made friends with every man he met, whatever his politics. He was popular, and deservedly so, for I judge he was a sincere and true man. He possessed great intelligence, and was uncommonly well informed in the affairs of the state. He understood the duties of almost every public officer, from justice of the peace and supervisor to that of chief magistrate of the commonwealth, and would have filled any office within the gift of the people with credit and satisfaction. He was the brother-in-law of Caleb and Lyman R. Lyon, and died some years since at his residence in the vicinity of Lyon's Falls. The judge was minus one arm, the left, and when asked how he came to lose it, was wont to say he would answer the question if the inquirer would ask no further. This condition being assented to, the judge would respond, "It was bitten off." The truth was, the judge never had any left arm.

Jefferson county was represented in the assembly in 1836 by Lowrey Barney, Richard Hulbert and Otis P. Starkey; Lewis by Charles Dayan; Oswego by Orville Robinson; St. Lawrence by Preston King and William S. Paddock.

### CHAPTER III.

William H. Seward—Presidential Election in 1836—Martin Van Buren Chosen—Burning of Land Records by a Mob.

A good share of the land in what was formerly the eighth senate district, embracing substantially the territory now comprising the eighth judicial district, was owned by several Hollanders, known as the Holland land company; and it was disposed of upon terms favorable to the rapid settlement of that part of the state. The land was sold mainly on credit, the company giving to the purchaser an "article," by which he agreed to pay a certain price and annual interest on the amount; the understanding being that while the interest was kept up the principal could be paid at convenience. So the settler took his time, kept up the interest as well as he could, and gave little attention to the principal. In many cases—possibly in a majority of them in some sections—the settlers failed to pay either principal or interest. Hence they were badly in arrears.

This was true as to a considerable part of Chautauqua county on the first of January, 1836, about which time the story was started that several capitalists in Batavia and elsewhere were negotiating for the purchase of these lands, and proposing to advance the price and to exact compound interest. The rumor created great excitement among the settlers, and early in February a mob assembled at the county seat of Chautauqua county, where the land office was kept, and deliberately pulled it down, and then effecting entrance into the stone vault, where the records and papers were deposited, took them



and conveyed them out of the village, piled them into a heap, and burned them.

Of course, there was no sense in this lawless proceeding; and yet, in the end, the settlers of the county were greatly benefited. The unpaid-for as well as the unsold lands were now disposed of to three gentlemen in New York, and William H. Seward was appointed their agent, and took up his residence in the county. He was then thirty-five years old, slim and straight, and very neatly dressed. He wore what is now termed a plug hat, and it was high-crowned. It made him look taller than he really was. His hair was dark auburn, and cut in fashion. I met him in the street, and was introduced to him there. As he had served his district four years in the state senate and been the nominee of his party for governor, I naturally looked for a man large in stature and good looking; but Mr. Seward was neither handsome nor large. His nose, even at that early day, was the most prominent thing about him. He did not impress one as a great man at all. He did not put on airs. He was not one of those men who look wise and leave you to infer that they are so because they keep silent. He did not set himself above you. On the contrary, he wished you to feel that you were his equal, and it would be strange if you felt the slightest embarrassment in his presence.

I did a good share of his work (printing) for a year or two, and came to be intimate with him, and learned to esteem him highly. He often came to my office for a job, and waited for its execution. In such cases he made himself entirely at home, and sometimes did a little more talking than would have been allowable in well-regulated printing offices. But Mr. Seward was a good talker, and though somewhat given to boasting, as I then thought, he was so agreeable and entertaining that one didn't mind it if he did now and then slip in a good word for himself. I have heard him say that he could prepare matter

for the type-setter more rapidly than any man he ever knew. He meant to say that he did not lack for ideas, nor words in which to clothe them, and so composed as fast as he could commit the words to paper. That he worked rapidly is confirmed by a statement made to me by a gentleman in Albany, who said he had known him to come to that city in the morning to address a public meeting in the afternoon, write out his speech during the forenoon, and have it put in type, so that it might be issued immediately after the meeting closed. He was a man that you could not help liking. If he was not in reality your friend, he would make you feel that he was ; and I have no reason to question his entire sincerity. I believe he was a true man. I have never supposed him an astute politician, but Thurlow Weed, I take it, early discovered that he was a man of integrity and great promise, and pressed him into the service of his party and the public as often as the opportunity offered.

While I have my notions about Mr. Weed, it has appeared to me that Mr. Seward was one of the foremost statesmen of his age. I don't think he was a political leader—there was certainly nothing of the boss about him—but he was backed by men skillful in leadership, to whom, I have no doubt, he owed much of the success he achieved. He was never a great man in the ordinary acceptation of the term, but he possessed an active brain, and was an untiring worker. He was governed by principle ; his intuitions were correct. His administration as governor was in no way remarkable, and I did not favor his nomination for president in 1860. I think the party did better when it named Mr. Lincoln, who had any amount of solid sense, while Mr. Seward was somewhat deficient in that commodity. He was a student and a philosopher, and not a very practical man. Of course, it is conceded that he made an excellent secretary of state. He was thoroughly equipped for the duties of that posi-



tion, while he might have failed in the executive chair. At all events, I think "Old Abe" was *the* man for the terrible ordeal through which the country was passing while he filled the presidential office.

But I have proceeded far enough in this direction. How did Mr. Seward get along with the infuriated settlers? Admirably. He forwarded letters, couched in courteous language, to all in arrears, inviting them to call at his office. Those interested generally heeded the invitation, when Mr. Seward told them, in the most friendly manner, that the way in which business had been done was by no means the best; that the settlers should surrender their contracts, called "articles," and take deeds instead. He advised them to pay as far as they were able, and take deeds, and to give mortgages, and pay the same as fast as they could raise the means. Everybody was allowed to make his own terms of payment, if desirous of doing the right thing; and the result was that order was restored and good feeling prevailed. Of course there was here and there a man who could not meet his payments, and some probably lost their lands; but I never heard that any man was oppressed, or had any reason to complain; while the truth is, the policy pursued has made the people of Chautauqua county thrifty and prosperous. The farmers generally got out of debt and became independent; whereas, had the old system been continued, the tillers of the soil would have been in much the condition of those in Albany and Rensselaer counties forty years ago, owning nothing and paying rent to two or three wealthy land-owners. Mr. Seward's was the right idea, that every man should own the land he cultivated, and if encumbered, clear off the debt at the earliest practicable moment, and so become his own master.

The election held in 1836 was an important one—in the estimate of the democracy. Martin Van Buren was chosen president, and Richard M. Johnson vice-presi-

dent. William L. Marcy was re-elected governor of New York, and John Tracy lieutenant governor. The delegation from this state in the lower house of congress consisted of forty-four members. Among others chosen were C. C. Cambreleng, of Suffolk; Edward Curtis, Ogden Hoffman, Gideon Lee, Eli Moore, all of New York; Zadok Pratt, of Greene; Arphaxad Loomis, of Herkimer; A. P. Grant, of Oswego; Henry A. Foster, of Oneida; Isaac H. Bronson, of Jefferson; John H. Prentiss, of Otsego; Amasa J. Parker, of Delaware; Mark H. Sibley, of Monroe; Hiram Gray, of Chemung; Francis Granger, of Ontario; Richard P. Marvin, of Chautauqua, and Millard Fillmore, of Erie.

In this (fifth) senate district, David Wager, of Oneida, was re-elected.

Jefferson county elected to the assembly, Richard Hulbert, Jotham Bigelow and John W. Tamblin; St. Lawrence, Preston King and William S. Paddock; Oswego, Caleb Carr and Orville Robinson.

## CHAPTER IV.

An Old-Time Editor, Edwin Croswell—The Cholera Excitement in 1832—Its Terrible Ravages.

I remember the summer of 1832 as though it were yesterday, and the great excitement that prevailed in that year on account of the cholera. The disease was a new one to the American people. They had heard of the Asiatic cholera, but it had hitherto been confined to the old world, and no one dreamed that the United States was likely to be visited by it. But in the latter part of June our country was startled by the information that the cholera had reached Montreal and Quebec. It almost immediately passed up the St. Lawrence, and across the lakes to Detroit. In July it appeared in Albany, but whether before or after it visited New York, I do not remember. It appeared to follow the channels of water communication—probably for the reason that all, or the major part, of the travel at that time was by water. The disease raged fearfully in New York for two or three weeks, the deaths numbering 200 to 300 per day, and then took its flight. My impression is that it did not visit the New England states to any great extent. It passed through this state on the line of the canal, visited most, if not all, of the lake towns, and in October struck New Orleans, and swept off 6,000 out of a population of 55,000.

Now, in referring to this matter, I am able to introduce to this generation an old-time editor, who, for a quarter of a century, wielded more influence in the democratic party of this state than any other individual. He was a

recognized power throughout the land. I refer to Edwin Croswell, the cultured editor of the Albany Argus. He was born at Catskill, I believe, and was the son of a clergyman. He was a practical printer, if I am not mistaken, and had a fine English education. He was rather small in stature, about the size of Mr. Seward, whom I last described, and had a dark, swarthy complexion and black curly hair. He stooped slightly, as is the habit of many of the craft—possibly on account of the great number of things stowed away in the upper story. As a writer, he was not free and outspoken, but expressed himself cautiously. He was a close thinker, and weighed all his utterances with the utmost care. He was everywhere recognized as a strong man, standing among the leading writers in the country on political, or perhaps I should say, party questions. He was an intense partisan; in fact, most political editors in his day were bigoted partisans. They looked upon those who differed with them very much as an orthodox Christian looks upon a so-called infidel—as a person who has no right to live. A republican—and in Mr. Croswell's time the party with which he acted was oftener called republican than democratic—in the estimation of every member of the party, was a better citizen and a truer man for belonging to that organization; and his opponents had the contrary impression. They considered every republican necessarily a rascal, insisting that he was a man who could not be safely trusted. Mr. Croswell was a gentleman in his tastes and instincts, and did not apply epithets to those differing with him. He always maintained his dignity, and exhibited the weak points of his adversary to the public gaze in room of calling him hard names. He was a graceful writer, and yet his articles did not lack force or strength. He was a clean man in private life, decorous in speech; he did not "slop over;" he never said unwise things. It was

through the judicious counsel of Mr. Croswell and the men with whom he acted and for whom he was in the habit of speaking that the republican party maintained its ascendancy in this state for a period of twenty years or more previous to 1838. Mr. Croswell, I judge, might have written a good essay on almost any subject, for he was a man of extensive information and fine literary culture, but I am not aware that he ever did anything in that line. He was simply a party editor. His productions all went into the *Argus*. The efforts of his life were devoted to the upbuilding of his party. He accumulated a handsome property out of the state paper, but lost it in speculation, and, I believe, died poor.

Mr. Croswell had rare conversational powers. It was a treat to listen to him. He spoke somewhat deliberately, but with remarkable clearness. He made you see things as he saw them. He spent an evening in my room at the old City hotel in Albany many years since, and, among other things, described the cholera epidemic of 1832 with such vividness that I can yet see the solemn stillness that prevailed in the streets, the deep concern written on every countenance, and the general gloom that settled down upon every place of business. While a majority of the victims of the terrible disease were persons of irregular and dissipated habits, a great many of those moving in the best society were stricken down and consigned to the grave before it was generally known that they were ill. "I called at the house of a friend one evening," said Mr. Croswell, "and passed a delightful hour with his family, the members of which were apparently in excellent health. The next morning I was appalled to hear that one of the daughters, a young lady of eighteen, was dead. Deacon Dutcher went to the market, shortly after sunrise, in perfect health. At three o'clock in the afternoon his remains were conveyed

to their last resting place. He died after an illness of eight hours."

These and similar occurrences Mr. Croswell portrayed with awful distinctness. There were fourteen deaths in one day—a large number for a population of 25,000—and the same number of funeral processions, for persons dying of cholera were interred as soon as they ceased to breathe, and these mournful exhibitions were calculated to fill the stoutest hearts with anxiety and alarm. No one could say whose turn would come next. No doubt many persons fell victims to the scourge through fear, and it is not unlikely there were some premature burials. These facts were related in a simple and graphic manner, and left an impression that time does not efface.

The epidemic of 1832 was wholly different from the disease under the same name with which this country has been visited at later periods. There was considerable cholera in certain localities in 1849 and 1854, but it did not do its work so quickly, nor was it so generally fatal as on its first appearance. In 1832 it appeared in Utica one Sunday morning; before night there were several deaths. It stole into Rochester during the night; the next day there were a dozen cases, two of which terminated fatally in a few hours; and new cases were constantly being reported. Three friends in Salina—at that date a more populous place than Syracuse—declared that they had no fear of cholera, and declined to change their habits of living. On coming into the street in the morning, one of the party was informed that a comrade of the trio was dead; and before night himself and the other had fallen victims to the disease. There has never been anything like it in this country during my remembrance.

Its worst ravages were in low and malarial regions, and where people were not careful to keep their premises sweet and clean. It was at home in filth and nastiness.



To guard against it, therefore, persons have but to clean up. We must cleanse and purify our great cities and small ones, and see to it that the people are supplied with the purest drinking water. It may come any year, if we invite it by criminal indifference as to the sanitary condition of our towns and cities. It will come as a penalty of our disregard of the laws of health, if it comes at all. It will come because we are content to breathe an atmosphere tainted by sickening odors, that is laden with pestilence, and because we drink unwholesome water and villainous beverages. It will come, if come it does, because it should come, because it is needed to teach us to be cleanly and decent.

## CHAPTER V.

Legislative Corruption Not a New Thing—A Reminiscence of the State Senate of 1836—The Panic of 1837—The Political Effect.

There has probably never been a time when a majority of mankind did not consider that the people were more corrupt and wicked in the age in which they lived than in any previous one. We are prone to regard the politicians of today as more base and unprincipled than they were half a century ago, while the men who founded our government fifty years earlier are looked upon almost as saints. This impression may be correct, but if the truth could be ascertained, I suspect it would be found to be an entire misconception. I believe men are growing better, not worse.

As evidence that there has been crookedness, nay, downright corruption, in our legislature before today, let me refer to what took place in the New York senate in the spring of 1836. Two members of that body, John C. Kemble, of Rensselaer county, and Isaac W. Bishop, of Washington, were formally charged with using their positions in the senate for pecuniary gain in stock speculations. The substance of the charge was, that when the bill to extend the time for completing the New York & Harlem railroad was under consideration in the senate, Kemble and Bishop made an agreement with one Bartow to delay the passage of said bill, and afterward to vote for the same, so as to enable said Bartow and others to make money by the purchase and sale of the stock; that said senators corruptly used their endeavors to delay, and did delay the passage of the bill accordingly, and afterward voted for it.



An investigating committee was ordered, before which all the facts were brought out. The charges were fully sustained, whereupon Kemble resigned. The senate then passed a resolution declaring Bishop guilty of moral and official misconduct, but not to the degree to warrant his expulsion. Thereupon Senators Young and Van Schaick resigned their seats as senators, refusing to sit in a body which had not the moral courage to expel a senator adjudged guilty of gross immorality and official misconduct. Subsequently Bishop resigned, saying that he had been "enticed" into doing what he had done. The position taken by Colonel Young and Mr. Van Schaick was the correct one. Kemble and Bishop having been declared guilty of moral and official delinquencies, they should have been expelled without ceremony. The case made a great deal of talk in the newspapers, and is cited as showing that bad men got into the legislature fifty years ago as they do yet, and being there, the body to which they belonged had not virtue enough to rid itself of them. It is very well to say that legislative bodies and political organizations should reform themselves, but when were they known to do it?

This was an era when great numbers of people proposed to get rich without labor, by sheer speculation. Paper money was exceedingly plenty, and stupendous fortunes were made in buying and selling city lots. For some reason the idea seemed to prevail that every little harbor on the chain of lakes from Sackets to Green Bay, Wisconsin, was destined to be a place of great commercial importance, and those who had money to spare invested in corner lots. Fabulous sums of money were made—upon paper. There are several ports where cities were laid out, city governments organized, and where newspapers were published, which have no place today even upon a map. There was a harbor on Lake Erie, a few miles above Dunkirk, called Van Buren, which at

one time could boast of having the biggest hotel in Chautauqua county, which had a good-sized newspaper and numerous stores and other places of business, that has no existence today. The hotel was taken down, and the material saved and converted to other uses. There was the city of Manhattan, a few miles from Toledo, Ohio, at which was published the Manhattan Advertiser, a wide-awake sheet, by one B. F. Smead, formerly of Steuben county, N. Y., which ceased to exist thirty years ago. As incredible as it may seem, the village of Port Ontario, in Oswego county, three miles from Pulaski, had at one time a city government, and proposed to rival Oswego. And these are but samples.

Milwaukee was then in its infancy, but had enormous expectations. Large amounts of money were invested there, and—sunk. The same is true, to some extent, as to Kenosha and Racine. Chicago was too inconsequential at that time to attract the attention of speculators. They may not have been suited with the “lay of the land,” which in a large measure was under water. As is generally known, it was an immense morass; so it was avoided. As a matter of fact, there was little money invested and lost there. The mania struck Michigan City and other ports on the east side of Lake Michigan. Several towns which have become considerable cities were all but used up. This is true of Toledo, Erie and Dunkirk. Detroit, Cleveland and Buffalo suffered severely, but, possessing many natural advantages, they recuperated at an early day, took a new lease of life, and have become important cities. Oswego suffered fearfully. Her business men were buried in a common ruin. There were two banks in the place, supposed to be good in any emergency, that went by the board. Among the operators there was a Mr. De Zeng, who owned a considerable tract in the western part of the then village. He had it laid out into lots, with streets and avenues appro-

priately named, and had the whole lithographed in the highest style of the art. Exhibiting his lithograph one day in Wall street, a gentleman took the liberty to inquire, "Mr. De Zeng, what kind of buildings cover this property?" "Buildings!" responded the owner, "Why, my dear sir, this property is too valuable to be built on!" And probably he spoke as he felt. Men were infatuated, insane. And the disease was all-per-vading. It possessed the small boy even.

For example, a gentleman from the east found himself in Milwaukee, and thought he would look at some of the property he had purchased a few days previously. He rode into town (there was not much of a town there in 1836) on horseback. Noticing a boy within call, he asked him to hold his horse a few minutes while he examined his lots. The boy did not object to the job. When the owner of the horse returned he handed the youth half a dollar for his services. The latter quickly tossed it back, with the remark, "Fifty cents will not buy anything in Milwaukee!" However, the time shortly arrived when those who remained in that embryo city were very glad to get fifty-cent pieces.

A gentleman said to me, "My father at that date, considering himself independently rich, gave me \$10,000 in cash to go west and invest according to my best judgment. I acted on his advice, made as good an investment as I was able, and *lost every dollar!*" His father lost all his property, and was obliged to depend upon his children for the necessaries of life.

The crash came early in 1837, and a terrific one it was. Though less general than the revulsion in 1873, it was even more calamitous in certain localities. There were towns of considerable importance and much promise in which the entire population found itself in a state of insolvency. Everybody was bankrupt. In May all the banks suspended, and there was a general panic. The

currency, consisting entirely of paper, was of an uncertain value. No one receiving a \$5 note could say what he could get for it. It might bring its face, or it might be worthless. A bill quoted at par today might be valueless tomorrow. As a matter of fact, a large share of the bank notes in circulation were badly depreciated, and many were worth nothing. The late Mr. Greeley, lecturing somewhere west about this period, being paid in the currency of that section, wished to know if he could not be furnished "counterfeit notes on some good eastern bank." It was a ticklish time, one of great difficulty for men engaged in business. The banks in which the funds of the general government were kept, suspended with the rest, so the federal treasury was in the same condition as the people—it could pay its debts only in depreciated bank notes.

In this emergency President Van Buren issued a proclamation for an extra session of congress, which convened the first of September, to take into consideration the state of the country. James K. Polk was chosen speaker of the house, but Blair & Rives were defeated as public printers, and Thomas Allen chosen. The president, in his message, recommended a divorce of the government from the banking institutions. This proposition encountered strong and very bitter opposition, not only in the whig party, but in the democratic as well. It was, however, ultimately adopted, and both parties are now satisfied with the plan.

## CHAPTER VI.

Distrust of the People—Nearly All Officers Appointed by Governor and Council of Appointment Previous to 1821—The Albany Regency.

For some reason there was immense distrust of the people among the men who organized our state government. It is almost literally true that the people had no rights whatever. They elected the governor and legislature—that is to say, those of them did who possessed a freehold worth £40—but almost every other officer was appointed. As late as 1821, 8,287 military and 6,663 civil officers held commissions from the council of appointment. Even justices of peace were not chosen by the people until 1826.

The legislature was almost omnipotent. It incorporated cities and villages; it authorized manufacturing, insurance, banking, canal, railroad and other corporations; in fact, no corporation could exist except under a charter granted by legislative enactment, and great care was exercised that no charter should be obtained clandestinely. If the people of Watertown wanted a bank, or a manufactory, or an amendment of their charter, they must give notice of the fact through the columns of some local newspaper, and continue the advertisement for six successive weeks; also in the state paper for the same length of time—a good thing for the latter concern—and then go to the legislature for permission to establish a bank or an insurance company. It was assumed that the people did not understand their own interests and wants; that the men chosen to represent them in the legislature did; so the matter was left



with the representatives. If they considered a banking institution required in the ambitious town of Enterprise, the charter was granted; otherwise it was withheld. After a while, a dozen or more localities, all desiring an increase of banking facilities, "pooled issues" and brought into existence a great number of banks. This kind of business was styled log-rolling legislation, and was vehemently condemned by those gentlemen whose constituents did not happen to be seeking favors at the hands of the legislature.

But this was not the end of state surveillance. A charter being obtained, there was a rush for the stock. This was true as to bank stock, where ten times the number of shares would be subscribed for than were authorized by the bill. Then commissioners were appointed to apportion the stock, who were charged with the grossest partiality, favoring friends and disregarding the claims of others.

I refer to these things as showing that the founders of our institutions lacked faith in the capacity of the people for self-government. They appear to have considered the legislative and executive departments of the government endowed with superhuman wisdom, while the people from whom they derived all their authority, and for whom they spoke and acted, were a lot of dolts and incapables.

In the progress of events, however, general statutes were passed authorizing individuals, under certain restrictions, to form themselves into associations for the purpose of engaging in banking, for building railroads, for publishing newspapers; in a word, for prosecuting any legitimate business. The legislature is no longer the overshadowing power it used to be. It has been found that the people are competent to do a great many things without the help of government. There is a good degree of local self-government. There is not so much of it as

there ought to be ; not so much as there will be some day, when the true province of government shall be better understood, as consisting in the protection of individuals in their person and property. Government never did and never can benefit the masses governed. It should let every person alone while he is a good citizen, attends to his own affairs, and does not try to overreach and injure his fellow men.

Nor did the politicians have quite as much faith in the masses as might be supposed, judging from the language they were wont to employ. Even the politicians of the democratic republican party, which was the dominant political organization in this state fifty and sixty years ago, must have lacked confidence in their adherents as a body, or they would not have undertaken to direct the affairs of the party through the agency of a regency, with headquarters at the state capital and auxiliaries in every county in the state.

What was known as the "Albany regency" embraced some of the ablest men and shrewdest politicians the country has ever known—such men as Ben Knowler, Martin Van Buren, W. L. Marcy, Azariah C. Flagg, Edwin Croswell, and John A. Dix. This is not by any means the entire list, but the names mentioned may be taken as samples of the crowd. They were all strong men. I have met them all, save Mr. Knowler. They were all-powerful throughout the state by means of the appointing power. Prior to 1847 there were five judges in every county—a first judge and four side judges—and no man was allowed to occupy a seat upon the bench of whose loyalty to party or the acts of the regency there could be the least question. Besides these officers there were masters and examiners in chancery in every county, designated ostensibly by the governor and senate, but really by the "regency" and its agents, the judges in the different counties. So the political affairs of the

dominant party were engineered by a small number of persons acting in perfect accord. The central power in Albany, with its trusted friends outside, dictated every appointment made. Hence, if a man wanted an office at the hands of the governor, it was necessary that he should be on good terms with the county judges, be a straightout democrat, and a reliable friend of theirs. Except he would swear allegiance to the powers that be, it was useless for him to look for an appointment.

With these things there was little complaint while the counties were new, and the number of persons qualified for and ambitious to serve the people in a judicial capacity small. After a while, however, many democrats became tired of this kind of politics, and insisted that the appointments should be made by more democratic methods. They opposed the "regency" and its style of doing business. It was a political machine; compared with it the one of which so much was heard in this state a few years since was a harmless affair. It is understood to have been the invention of Mr. Van Buren. If so it served him well in the nominating conventions, but was powerless with the people.

The constitutional convention held in 1846 was asked for by a vote of 213,257 for, to 33,860 against, and the main object sought to be accomplished by its advocates was the overthrow of this political machine. The fight between the barnburners and the hunkers, which began about that time, and severed the democratic party in twain, had its origin in the fact that the former were denied (as they contended) a fair share of the honors and emoluments of office under the regency plan of dispensing the same.



## CHAPTER VII.

Collapse in Values Following the Suspension of 1837—The Democracy Demoralized in New York in 1838—Seward Elected Governor.

I have dwelt at some length upon the mania for speculation so prevalent in many portions of our land in 1835-6, and which ended the following year in the suspension of cash payment by our banking institutions, by the federal and most if not all the state governments, and in the bankruptcy of large numbers of the people. Those who had kept out of debt were fortunate, but it was a troublesome time for others. The simple truth was, there was no such thing as paying debts except the creditor would take property. There was great tribulation in the financial and business world. The only redeeming thing in the premises was that nearly everybody was in the same boat.

Of course, there was a great deal of dissatisfaction and grumbling. Everybody found fault with somebody or something. The government was blamed. The whigs insisted that if the charter of the United States bank had been renewed the country would have escaped the great calamity in which it was involved ; and there were democrats, smarting under the terrible reverses they had experienced, who were inclined to the same opinion. They called themselves conservative democrats. It was through their influence that Thomas Allen was chosen printer to the national house of representatives, who commenced the publication of the *Madisonian* newspaper in Washington, in opposition to the *Globe*, the organ of General Jackson and Mr. Van Buren. One of the New

York senators, Mr. Tallmadge, gave the Van Buren administration the cold shoulder. Several of the members of the house from this state, who had been chosen as democrats, acted with him. Among them were Henry A. Foster of Oneida, A. P. Grant of Oswego, and, I think, the representative from this district, Isaac H. Bronson. So the party was badly demoralized; and when the election came off in November, 1837, it sustained a Waterloo defeat. Of the 128 members of assembly, the democrats elected barely 27! Of these Allegany elected 2, Clinton 1, Chemung 1, Delaware 2, Herkimer 2, Jefferson 3, Lewis 1, Madison 3, Otsego 3, Putnam 1, Rockland 1, Sullivan 1, St. Lawrence 2, Seneca 1, Suffolk 2, Warren 1. Total 27.

The democrats did not fare much better in the senate, but as three-fourths of the senators held over, they held control of that body. In this district Avery Skinner, father of Charles R. Skinner, was chosen.

The democrats elected most of their ticket in this county, but they lost their nominee for sheriff, Joseph Sheldon. Peleg Burchard was chosen county clerk, and Messrs. Daniel Wardwell, Richard Hulbert and Charles B. Hoard were elected to the assembly.

From Lewis, William Dominick was chosen; from St. Lawrence, Preston King and Myron G. Peck; from Oswego, Arvin Rice and John M. Richardson. Luther Bradish was sent from Franklin, (a third time,) and was made speaker of the assembly. He was in 1838 chosen lieutenant governor.

The result of the election in 1837 showed that the democrats had lost their "grip" upon this state, and possibly upon a majority of the states, for they met with serious reverses almost everywhere. Still, they did not give up, but made a vigorous effort to recover the ground they had lost. In this state, the home of Mr. Van Buren, tremendous exertions were put forth in 1838 to maintain

control of the executive department of the government, and to secure a majority in the legislature. Marcy and Tracy were renominated for governor and lieutenant governor, and the strongest men for local candidates were everywhere named. But in vain. The whigs made nearly a clean sweep, electing William H. Seward governor by 11,000 or 12,000 majority, a majority of the congressional delegation, 82 of the 128 members of assembly, and all but captured the senate. Even Jefferson went whig in that year by about 600 majority, electing to the assembly Charles E. Clarke, Calvin Clark and Philip P. Gaige. Joseph Clark, of Madison, was elected senator in this district. Lewis county elected Sanford Coe to the assembly; St. Lawrence, Myron G. Peck and Asa Sprague; Oswego, Samuel Hawley and E. B. Judson.

The congressional delegation from this state embraced Thomas C. Chittenden of this district, Edward Curtis, Moses H. Grinnell and Ogden Hoffman of New York, Aaron Vanderpool of Columbia, Daniel D. Barnard of Albany, John Fine of St. Lawrence, Andrew W. Doig of Lewis, David P. Brewster of Oswego, Richard P. Marvin of Chautauqua, and Millard Fillmore of Erie—most of them men of unquestioned ability.

In looking through the names of our representatives in congress, one cannot well help thinking that the men, as a whole, were a great way ahead of those now honored with seats in that body. Still, it is possible that we had too high an opinion of the congressmen chosen fifty years ago, and that we do not think as well of the modern representative as we ought. At all events, the time has come when little deference is paid to an individual because he happens to go to congress. We all feel that "the woods are full" of men who are every way his equal, and that few really first-class people find their way to Washington, the reason being that such will not *seek* the position.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Martin Van Buren and Francis P. Blair—Personal Reminiscences—The Farmer Statesman and Editor—The Organ of the Administration.

While residing in Oswego I saw Martin Van Buren repeatedly. He had some interest there at one time, and he may have been there to look after it. At any rate, he was accustomed to visit the place almost every season. He generally remained a day or two, and then left by steamer for a trip down the St. Lawrence. He had a brother, Major Van Buren, who was in the habit of spending his summers in Oswego. He was an amiable man, and somewhat out of health, I think. At all events, he was not a man of much force.

On one of these visits the ex-president was accompanied by Francis P. Blair, senior, some fifteen years editor of the Washington Globe, and the intimate and trusted friend of General Jackson. For the general I had profound admiration in my younger days. I am not much of a man-worshipper, but the regard I felt for Old Hickory when he was chosen president and while he filled the office of chief magistrate came very near being reverential. I own that I was a strong Jackson man, and would have gone farther to shake his hand than that of any man of whom I had read or heard.

So it afforded me supreme satisfaction to meet one of his most devoted friends, to converse with one who had enjoyed his confidence, who was thoroughly familiar with the great chieftain, with his integrity, firmness and devotion to the welfare of his country. I had my first glimpse of Mr. Blair while he was walking in the street

side by side with Mr. Van Buren. Mr. Blair was a tall, rawboned Kentuckian, though born in Virginia. He was several inches taller than Mr. Van Buren; and yet he was so bent over that the prim and straight Van Buren appeared the taller of the two. He was not exactly round-shouldered, for he was hoop-backed, and when seated in a chair the upper part of his body stood at an angle of forty-five degrees. I have seen a good many stooping editors, Mr. Greeley among others, but Mr. Blair was without a rival in that particular. Some one has told me that he was accustomed to do his writing upon his knee. If so, that might account for his habit of badly leaning while talking or sitting. He was liberally educated, and studied law, but never practised. He early took part in politics, and in 1824 supported Mr. Clay for the presidency, but dissented from his views, especially in relation to the United States bank. When, in 1829, the nullification movement was making headway in South Carolina, Mr. Blair published an article against it in a Kentucky newspaper which attracted the attention of General Jackson, who invited the writer to Washington to take charge of the "Globe," a democratic paper about to be established at the federal capital. It was peculiarly the organ of the administration while General Jackson and Mr. Van Buren occupied the presidential chair. In fact, it continued to be the mouth-piece of the democratic party until Mr. Polk's accession to the presidency, when it was thought necessary for the harmony of the party that the Globe should be placed in other hands, and Mr. Blair was offered the mission to Spain, which, however, he declined, and retired to his farm at Silver Springs, Maryland, just five miles out of the city of Washington.

Here Mr. Blair was residing when I met him in Oswego. He was dressed in the garb of a country farmer, and wore a white hat. In company with one or two others, I passed



an evening with these distinguished gentlemen. They stopped at the old Welland house. My companions were more interested in the Kinderhook statesman than I was—perhaps they had seen him less—while I confess I desired to talk with the ex-editor, who had seen so much of the great men of the nation, and known so many of them personally ; so I had him chiefly to myself. I paid little attention to the “little magician,” the sobriquet by which Mr. Van Buren was quite commonly known, though I did notice that evening, and for the first time, the peculiarly “foxy” look in the twinkle of his eyes.

Up to that date the custom of “interviewing” people, great and little, had not come into vogue. So I did not fill a couple of columns of my journal the next day with what was said by these men who had filled so large a space in the public eye ; and it is now rather late in the day to write out a very full report. But this I do recollect, that Mr. Blair was a remarkably plain man, plain in his manners, plain in his utterances. There was not an atom of polish or style about him. There was nothing to show that he was the great man he certainly was ; nothing to show that he was a man of education even, for he talked of his “taters,” of which he told me he had fifteen acres growing. He had the southern and western style of expressing himself, which sounded outlandish enough to Yankee ears, notwithstanding his long residence at the national capital, where some very good English must have been spoken, and by those with whom he was on terms of intimacy. He appeared to be absorbed in his farming operations, and was giving little attention to politics. He was no longer an actor in the angry strifes which kept the political world in a ferment, but simply an observer. He told me that he had harvested about one thousand bushels of wheat, and cut large quantities of hay. To an inquiry I made as to the cost of his farm, he responded :

“The *best* cost me fourteen dollars per acre, the *worst* twenty-eight dollars !”

He explained that the land was badly worn and considered comparatively valueless when he made his first purchase, but finding that under his style of tillage it could be made to produce good crops, the owners of adjacent property were asking and compelling buyers to pay higher prices. Lands that could once be bought at \$14 per acre were then selling at \$50.

He was the owner of about 350 acres, and he had made them worth about \$100 each. The people around him were beginning to discover that their farms, rightly cultivated, were capable of producing well. “And Washington,” remarked Mr. Blair, “affords the best market in the country. I am selling my hay at \$1 and \$1.25 per hundred, my ‘taters’ at \$1.25 per bushel, and my wheat at \$1. Of the last named article I raise thirty bushels, and sometimes thirty-five, to the acre.” It will be borne in mind that I am writing of values as they existed nearly fifty years ago, when they ruled much lower than they now do.

On the subject of politics Mr. Blair was a magazine of information. He was still solicitous for the welfare of the democracy, and regretted the divisions which then existed in the party in this state. He did not have a high opinion of political morals at the seat of government. “Everything is subservient to and controlled by money,” was the sentiment of Mr. Blair. “Money is the controlling element in legislation. It influences the action of congressmen; it corrupts those who would otherwise be upright and honest; it buys up the press; at least, it *induces* it to observe silence when it should be outspoken.”

His utterances were as simple as those of an unpolished countryman who had never written a line for publication in his life. The language employed was of the

most ordinary kind; and I found myself constantly inquiring, "Can it be possible that this is the man from whose brain emanated the trenchant leaders that appeared day after day in the organ of the national democracy? Is this the man who for fifteen years battled Clay and Webster and the other giants acting with them? Is this the man who spoke for General Jackson and Mr. Van Buren and the army of men who followed their lead?" Mr. Blair was a man who indulged in no nonsense. He was always terribly in earnest. He never said a pleasant thing concerning his adversaries. Politics was a serious business with him, and not a subject for levity. So he lashed his political opponents day after day and month after month. There was no good in them. They were corrupt, nay, thoroughly rotten all the way through. In these days such a paper would be without influence, for no man would read it who was not a blind partisan or a bigoted fool. It would not make converts, for people are not converted by abuse. It was a power when General Jackson was at the head of the government, for the times seemed to require an executive with positive qualities. Presidents Monroe and Adams had been negative men, amiable and peace-loving. Jackson was the reverse. He was a man of iron will, had opinions of his own, and when satisfied of their correctness, did not hesitate to stand by them, whatever the consequences might be. His entire administration was bold and aggressive, almost warlike. So the newspaper that spoke for it was anything but pacific. It was stern, implacable, savage. It was on the war-path from the day of its first issue until Mr. Blair retired from it.

In 1848 Mr. Blair withdrew from the regular democratic party and supported Mr. Van Buren for the presidency. After the repeal of the Missouri compromise he took an active part in the organization of the republican party.



## CHAPTER IX.

The Independent Treasury—Observations on the Subject of Banking—  
Nomination of Harrison—The Campaign of 1840—Seward Re-elected  
Governor—Impressions of Mr. Van Buren.

In 1839 the whigs again carried Jefferson county, electing their entire delegation to the assembly, consisting of Chas. E. Clarke, Calvin Clark and Stephen Johnson ; St. Lawrence county elected Zenas Clark and Asa Sprague ; Lewis, Chester Buck ; Oswego, Peter Devendorf and William Duer.

To the senate, Sumner Ely of Otsego county, democrat, was chosen.

At this time the democrats favored a divorce of the government from the banking institutions. The organ of the party in this county, the "Jeffersonian," carried at the head of its editorial columns for a year or two these words :

"FOR AN INDEPENDENT TREASURY—AGAINST A NATIONAL BANK."

Some democratic journals were hostile to all banks. I had the impression myself that men who had solicited and obtained authority from the legislature to engage in the business of banking, with the privilege of issuing their promises to pay as money, ought to be compelled to make their promises good or suffer the consequences. I did not believe in granting bank charters to irresponsible individuals, to those who could not or would not keep their engagements under all circumstances. I was opposed to such charters, insisting that if they were bestowed upon any man or class of men, they should be given to all asking them who could put up the requisite

security that they would fulfill their promises. In other words, the paper under my charge was for free banking, if we were to have banks, and so helped start the movement which resulted in the passage of our general banking law. I think my paper was the first one in the state to declare against the system of granting special charters and to favor the plan which was ultimately adopted.

The campaign of 1840 was altogether unique. There has been nothing like it in our history. The whigs nominated General Harrison, a man without special qualifications for the presidential office, but a most worthy citizen, and who had made a good record as a fighter of Indians in the western territories. He had been a member of the Ohio senate, and of both branches of congress, and commanded at the battle of Tippecanoe, fought on the 7th of November, 1811, and won a brilliant victory over the Indians in command of Tecumseh's brother, the prophet. At the time of his nomination he was living in retirement on a farm at North Bend, Ohio, a short distance below Cincinnati. He was well advanced in life, being sixty-seven years old, and not much was known of him. Nothing could be said against him. He suited the masses of his party, who set up a wild hurrah for him the day he was nominated, and they continued to shout and sing his praises until he was wafted into the presidential chair. He was almost literally hurrahed into office. A Baltimore newspaper, in the early part of the campaign, stated that the general lived in a log cabin on the Ohio river, and drank hard cider; whereupon his supporters commenced the building of log cabins everywhere, and there were few settlements in the northern states that could not boast of one of these rude edifices. In most cases they were supplied with hard cider and other beverages. Meetings were held in them at stated intervals, and as the day of the election drew near they were occupied almost constantly. Numerous

mass gatherings were held—held upon very short notice—and they were *mass* gatherings, some of them monster affairs, for they appeared to be attended by everybody, men, women and children. Persons turned out who had never attended a political meeting before, paying their own expenses. The campaign run itself. It was inexpensive so far as the whigs were concerned, every man desiring “a change” contributing his share to the general fund. The supporters of General Harrison appeared to be animated by a sort of holy zeal, similar to that inspiring religious enthusiasts at certain periods in the world’s history. They declined to argue with their opponents. They did not consider it a time for discussing political issues. They were fanatically and frantically for “a change.” There was an earnestness about them that would have defeated the best democrat in the country by any whig of fair character. Opposition to them was vain and useless. Every effort the democrats made simply reacted. They might as well have taken themselves to some secure retreat and waited for the storm to pass by. It could no more be breasted than a western cyclone.

The result of the campaign disappointed no one. The democracy were doomed from the outset; and still they made a vigorous fight. They did the best they could. They carried seven states out of the twenty-six, and Mr. Van Buren received sixty of the 294 electoral votes.

Of course, the whigs were greatly elated, and the democrats correspondingly depressed. It was humiliating enough to be defeated, but to be beaten in the way they had been, without any apparent reason, by hurrahs and song singing, was disheartening to the last degree.

However, the whig triumph was short-lived. General Harrison lived only one short month after taking the oath of office. John Tyler then became president, refused to heed the wishes of Henry Clay, the whig leader in con-

gress, quarreled with the men who had elected him, and in the end threw the weight of his influence against his party.

So the great whig victory of 1840 came to nought. The party would have been quite as well situated had Mr. Van Buren been chosen. In that event it would have been a unit. As it was, it was terribly divided and demoralized.

Jefferson elected to the assembly in that year William McAllister, William C. Pierpont and Joseph Webb; St. Lawrence county returned Zenas Clark and Solomon Pratt; Lewis, Eliphalet Sears; Oswego, William Duer and Edward B. Judson.

To the senate, Henry A. Foster was chosen from the fifth district.

Thomas C. Chittenden was re-elected to congress from this district; David P. Brewster from that of Oswego; Henry Van Rensselaer from St. Lawrence; and Andrew W. Doig from Lewis.

As their colleagues, appeared (for the first time) John McKeon and Fernando Wood of New York; the brilliant Richard D. Davis of Poughkeepsie; John G. Floyd of Oneida. Among others re-elected were Christopher Morgan, Francis Granger and Millard Fillmore.

William H. Seward was re-elected governor, receiving a plurality of 5,203 over W. C. Bouck, or about half the majority he obtained over Governor Marcy in 1838, (10,421.)

And here I may as well give my impressions of Mr. Van Buren. He was a politician, and undoubtedly one of the shrewdest we have ever had in this state; that is to say, he was cautious and wary, never allowed himself to get excited, never was off his guard, never "slopped over." His opponents said he was sly and cunning; that there was a good deal of the "fox" about him; but I have come to the conclusion, after a careful examination

of his record, that he was far above the average politician. He was ambitious, as were Clay and Webster and Calhoun and Silas Wright and William H. Seward. A great many very excellent men have been ambitious, and they were no worse for it. Mr. Van Buren had a bright, keen intellect, but I have not been able to discover that there was anything tricky about him. I think he was a square man and upright. His administration was one of the purest the nation has ever had. His bitterest opponent, if living, would be troubled to put his finger upon a bad appointment or a discreditable act during the four years he occupied the presidential chair. He was charged with non-committalism, but there was nothing in his conduct while at the head of the nation to warrant the charge. Though temperate in the expression of his sentiments, there was never any doubt as to the meaning of his public utterances; and having taken a position he was as firm as Old Hickory. He was not an angular man; there was no roughness about him; he was a gentleman—a gentleman in his instincts, a gentleman in the presence of his friends and foes, a gentleman in all the relations of life. He was rather small in stature, though well formed. Referring to a visit of Mr. Van Buren to the Old Dominion, while he was vice-president, Mrs. Jessie Benton Fremont states that “it shocked the people of the ancient commonwealth, who were tall, to find him so small.” But he was so agreeable in his manners, so polite in his intercourse with all with whom he came in contact, that his friends were as numerous as his acquaintances. Young people all liked him, for he took notice of and interest in them. He knew how to entertain, making all who visited him entirely at home. He dressed with great care. His clothes fitted perfectly, and they were carefully brushed.

In a word, he was a clean man, clean in his person, clean in his morals, and conscientious in his political

views. General Jackson had implicit faith in him, which is pretty good evidence of his trustworthiness. Had he been a trickster, the general would have made the discovery and given him a wide berth. But the two remained the warmest friends so long as General Jackson lived. I think he came as near being a statesman as any man we have had during the last half a century. I do not suppose he was altogether unselfish, but I doubt if the age in which he lived did justice to him. I believe he was a better man than he was esteemed, and that the more his private and public life is scanned the brighter it will appear. I think he was as good a man as our state has ever produced.

In later chapters, wherein the administration of President Van Buren is concisely reviewed and the campaign of 1840 more particularly described, I have given fuller details of this remarkable political upheaval and of the causes leading thereto, to which readers are referred who care for a more complete knowledge of the same.



## CHAPTER X.

The Albany Regency—Who Composed It—What They Did—William L. Marcy—Azariah C. Flagg—John A. Dix.

The individuals composing what was termed the “Albany regency,” so far as I can judge from my personal knowledge of them and the reputation they bore among their contemporaries, were men of more than ordinary ability and rare integrity. I do not think very much of their style of democracy; nevertheless I concede that they were upright men, and meant well. They liked to govern, but they intended to give the people good government. If they were selfish, they were sensible. They seldom committed an indiscretion, and personally they were above reproach.

I have already given my impressions of Martin Van Buren. I think well of him—better than I did when he was in official life, and his opponents were saying very mean and bitter things about him.

William L. Marcy I never knew personally, though I have met him. He was a majestic man in appearance. He was larger than Daniel Webster, with coarser features. If looks were a sure criterion by which to estimate men, Governor Marcy would have stood very high. I don't think the country has had many abler men than the governor. He was not an orator, as Webster was—I am not aware that he ever made any speeches—but as a writer he was the peer of the Massachusetts statesman; and I have always had the impression that if he had remained in his native state, (Massachusetts,) where greater deference is, or *was*, paid to their public men than with us, he might have ranked with the “godlike

Daniel.” He was certainly a superior judge and an able executive, and won distinction as secretary of state under Franklin Pierce. He was, moreover, a gentleman whose integrity was never questioned in any quarter. His opponents sometimes dubbed him “breeches Marcy,” because, while acting as judge in the western part of the state, having torn his pantaloons, he sent them to the tailor for repair, who charged for his services four or five shillings, and the judge, in keeping an itemized account of his expenses, charged the same to the state, and it was audited by the comptroller.

Azariah C. Flagg, a native of Clinton county, I think, and at one time editor of the Plattsburg Republican, was a man whose name was the synonym of virtue and integrity. He was short and thick, dark complexioned, and prepared to give you a square answer to any question you might address him on very short notice. He was a plain man in his personal appearance, and plain in his speech. He went to the assembly from Clinton county in 1823, and served two years. In 1826 he was appointed secretary of state, and held the position seven years, at the end of which he was made comptroller, and held that office ten years. He was an able financier. His reports as financial officer of the state were models of perspicuity and clearness, and the suggestions they contained were so sensible that they were adopted by the legislature almost as a matter of course. He possessed an unusual amount of good practical sense, and so was a strong man. At the commencement of the troubles in the democratic organization which led to the defeat of Silas Wright for governor in 1846, Mr. Flagg acted with the radical wing; and the tremendous fight at the state convention at Syracuse in 1847 was over the nomination of comptroller, the barnburners being for Mr. Flagg and the hunkers against him. As some readers may recollect, Mr. Flagg was defeated and Orville Hungerford of



Watertown nominated ; but the latter was badly beaten at the election.

Mr. Flagg afterwards removed to New York, where he was appointed to an important position in the financial department of the city government, and where he remained until failing health compelled him to relinquish the same. The last time I met him was in the park fronting the city hall, during his residence in the city. He had become an old man, and looked thin and jaded. I have always had a partiality for straightforward, reliable men, so I counted myself the friend of Mr. Flagg.

John A. Dix was another gentleman whose name has been associated with "the regency." He was as unlike the individual last described as it is possible to conceive. General Dix was a literary man, and not a politician. He was scholarly in his tastes and manners. He was modest and gentle as a woman. While I was residing in Oswego, the General came there and addressed a political meeting. The next day he took the steamer for Ogdensburg, and having business down the St. Lawrence, I went along. I had been introduced to him at the meeting, and was at once recognized by him on the boat. As he was without traveling companions, and socially inclined, we very naturally fell into conversation, and were together a good part of the day. Arriving at Ogdensburg, the best parlor was assigned us at the hotel, with bedrooms off. The following day the General, with others, addressed a mass meeting in one of the country towns, (Madrid, if I remember right,) and I was requested to go along for company. We returned in the evening, occupied the same quarters at the hotel, and the next day went up the river and lake together as far as Kingston, when I passed over to Oswego, and the General went on to the Falls, I believe. I was with him, therefore, a good part of three days, and saw him to the best advantage. When I say he was one of the most perfect gentlemen I

have ever met, I describe him fully. I have already said he was not a politician, and the wonder is that he should ever have been in politics at all. He was not qualified for leadership; he was too impulsive. He was, however, a very useful man. He was a ready writer, and wrote well; and that may have been the reason he was given a position at the state capital at an early day. He was first made adjutant general and a regent of the university. He succeeded Mr. Flagg as secretary of state in 1833, and held the office six years. He was afterward member of assembly, U. S. senator, minister to France, naval officer of New York, secretary of the treasury, and governor. He was in office nearly all his long life, acquitted himself creditably in every station, was a thorough patriot, a man of integrity, and an estimable Christian gentleman; and yet he was no such man as Martin Van Buren or Governor Marcy or Silas Wright. He lacked their coolness and even temperament.

I met him in the office of the New York Evening Post about the time the national administration was proposing to repeal the Missouri compromise and allow slavery to obtain a foothold in territory that had been consecrated to freedom. Stephen A. Douglass was arranging his "squatter sovereignty" scheme. He proposed at the outset to organize the territory of Kansas, and let the slaveholders take their colored property there on the same conditions the northern man took his cattle and horses. He afterward concluded that the better way would be to make two territories instead of one, thinking doubtless that the slaveholders would get possession of one and the northern settlers of the other. Accordingly the Kansas-Nebraska bill was introduced and engineered through congress. It was at the commencement of this great struggle that I met General Dix as above stated. Preston King was present; also John Bigelow, who was then one of the editors of the Post.

The question came up among those present as to the course democrats would pursue in case congress should adopt the policy it was evidently disposed to inaugurate. General Dix was the most excited person of the crowd. He rose from his seat, and, striking his cane upon the floor, declared that if the democratic party should dare to repeal the Missouri compromise and open the north-west territory to slavery, "So help me, heaven, it will not have the support of John A. Dix!" Yet the policy adopted by the administration *did have the support* of that gentleman, who, I think, acted with his party and sustained all its measures until Mr. Buchanan's cabinet was broken up by the retirement of several of its members, who decided to link their fortunes with the southern confederacy, when he was invited to take the treasury portfolio. It was while occupying this position, if I remember right, that he gave his celebrated order, that "if any one attempts to haul down the American flag, shoot him on the spot." From this time onward he became a war democrat, and was elected governor of this state in 1872 over Francis Kernan.

When I went with him to St. Lawrence county he held the office of U. S. senator, and told me, among a great many other interesting and curious things, that there were almost literally no extempore speeches delivered in that body. He stated that when he entered the senate he was advised (by Colonel Benton, I think) against impromptu speech-making, saying that it was well understood that every set speech was carefully prepared; that even John C. Calhoun, who was understood to be one of the readiest men in congress, was in the habit of spending days in writing and committing his speeches. I heard General Dix two or three times while I was with him, and I observed that the speech he made was always the same. There is no objection to this. Few can make a good speech on the spur of the moment.

## CHAPTER XI.

Letter of Daniel Wardwell, M. C. from the Jefferson District—The Rejection of Mr. Van Buren as Minister to England—The Bank Controversy—Some Effects.

In writing up my recollections I did not intend to go back of the date of my entrance upon journalism, (1834,) nor do I now propose to deviate from that plan. Some of my friends, however, have been looking over old letters and documents in their possession, and finding papers which possess more or less interest, have kindly placed them at my disposal. Among these is a letter from the Hon. Daniel Wardwell, who represented this district in the twenty-second and twenty-third congresses, to Hon. William Ruger, formerly a lawyer in Watertown, in reference to the rejection of the nomination of Martin Van Buren as minister to England. Following is the letter, which, of course, was a private one :

WASHINGTON CITY, Feb. 11, 1832.

DEAR SIR:—Your kind letter was received, and is now before me. The question you asked me in relation to Mr. Van Buren is already answered. Great men will sometimes do very unwise and foolish acts. The late transactions in the senate (I mean as they really took place, not as they are reported) have convinced me that however dignified a man's station may be, however great his talents in the estimation of the people, and whatever professions he may make of patriotism and love of country, he can sometimes descend to the most unjustifiable and degrading acts for the most selfish and unworthy purposes. I never can look upon the leaders in the late affair, in relation to Mr. Van Buren, as I have done. Their professions of patriotism are a very thin veil to conceal their real motives. We shall have a stormy and boisterous session hereafter. The subjects before the house are calculated to call forth the most angry passions of our nature. I think I am prepared to meet what may come without much hesitation. The business of congress, as it daily transpires, is faithfully detailed in the papers, and will

reach you as soon as I can transmit it by letter. Our delegation are in good spirits, ready to do our duty on every important question.

General Jackson's health is good, the opposition prints to the contrary notwithstanding. Let me hear from you occasionally.

I am truly yours,

D. WARDWELL.

WM. RUGER, Esq.

Just why the senate refused to confirm the nomination of Mr. Van Buren is not apparent. He was probably shelved out of jealousy and spite. He was disliked by his political opponents because he enjoyed the confidence of General Jackson, who placed him at the head of his cabinet when he became president. They regarded him as a political intriguer, and did not consider him entitled to the position to which he had been named. They hoped to destroy him politically. There is no question that Mr. Van Buren was a shrewd man; he was a wide-awake politician; he was a match for anybody in the state or the country; but I have not been able to discover that he was not quite as upright and as much of a statesman as any of his assailants. I do not find any evidence that he was a corrupt man. He held a good many important public positions. He was state senator eight years, a member of the constitutional convention of 1821, and attorney general of the state, but it has never been intimated that he used money to gain any of these places, or that the methods employed by him were not entirely legitimate and fair.

The rejection of Mr. Van Buren was a mistake, or, as Mr. Wardwell puts it, it was "unwise and foolish." It was intended to crush the president's friend. It may or may not have made him president. It is certain that he was chosen to that coveted position, while the leaders in the fight against him "got left."

The action of the senate was followed by an angry and bitter controversy between that body and President Jackson, which continued through his official life. In July, 1832, the president vetoed a bill, which had gone



through congress, to re-charter the United States bank. This created a tremendous uproar in the financial and business world. General Jackson was in nomination for a second term at the time; he knew, or might have known, that no effort would be spared to defeat him, but he was indifferent to opposition. The issue was squarely presented by him—if the people preferred a national bank to his re-election they would so declare at the polls. They, however, concluded to sustain General Jackson, and they did it by a majority so overwhelming that the bank was practically dead from the moment the result of the election was ascertained.

The next year the secretary of the treasury, by direction of the president, ordered that the public moneys, which up to that period had been kept in the United States bank, should be deposited in certain state banks. This act was savagely denounced; the president was called a tyrant and dictator; the senate passed a resolution censuring his conduct; the president protested against the same in one of the most eloquent documents ever penned by an executive. Colonel Benton then introduced his resolution to expunge the resolution of censure from the records of the senate, and he adhered to his purpose of securing its passage until he succeeded in having black lines drawn around it, declaring it to be expunged by order of the senate.

These were very exciting times. Everybody was a politician—was either a republican or a whig, for two years after the campaign of 1832 General Jackson's opponents assumed the name of whig, and styled those who disagreed with them tories and locofocos. Men knew then why they preferred one party to the other. They could give a reason for the faith that was in them, even if it was not always a good one. There were lots of people who were democrats because they had faith in General Jackson, while a great many others were his

opponents because they bitterly disliked him and all his measures.

But enough of digression. The campaign of 1840 was succeeded by an era of quietude in political circles. John Tyler became president, and from the outset refused to carry out the policy marked out by the leaders of the whig party. Bills for establishing a national bank went through the national legislature, but Mr. Tyler vetoed them as often as they were passed, and it ultimately became evident that he was irreconcilably opposed to such an institution as his party desired; and it was even doubtful if he would consent to the charter of any kind of a national bank. So the pet measure of the politicians who triumphed in 1840 was killed dead, and the party was badly demoralized.

In that year (1841) the state went democratic. William Ruger, the gentleman to whom Mr. Wardwell's letter was written, was chosen to the senate from the fifth district. To the assembly, from Jefferson county, Elihu C. Church, Elihu M. McNiel and John W. Tamblin were elected. Lewis was represented by Carlos P. Scovill; St. Lawrence by Calvin T. Hulburt and George Redington; Oswego by Peter Devendorf and Robert C. Kenyon.

I believe all the above were democrats, and they generally took the places of whigs.



## CHAPTER XII.

Bouck and Dickinson Chosen Governor and Lieutenant Governor in 1842—How They Looked—A Strong Legislature—"Admiral" Hoffman and General Dix Both Members—Some Others who were There.

The refusal of John Tyler to carry out the policy of Mr. Clay and other whig leaders so paralyzed the party which rode into power on the cyclone of 1840 that it made little fight the next year; consequently the democrats, who had considered themselves buried beyond resurrection, were generally successful. The demoralization of their opponents gave them most of the states that they had previously lost. They carried the assembly of this state by a large majority. In 1842, therefore, they felt that they had a fair chance of electing their state ticket, and they brought forward their most available men. They nominated for governor William C. Bouck, who had held the office of canal commissioner for many years, and was looked upon as one of the most faithful officials the state had ever possessed. Associated with him, for lieutenant governor, was Daniel S. Dickinson, a wide-awake attorney, residing at Binghamton. The nominations were made *viva voce*, and without a dissenting vote. The ticket was made to be chosen, and it received a plurality of about 22,000. The convention nominating it was presided over by Judge Fine of St. Lawrence, and was addressed by Richard D. Davis, of Dutchess county, a speaker of extraordinary brilliance and eloquence. Few of the men of today ever heard of the man; yet there was no name like his for half a dozen years. During several campaigns he was in great demand, and spoke every day and evening. He was elected

to congress this same year, when in the zenith of his fame. About this time he was overtaken by some kind of disease, which incapacitated him for public speaking, and he shortly after died. He was a man of medium size, and fine looking.

Governor Bouck was a very ordinary man. He was, no doubt, an excellent canal commissioner; his talents were all of a practical kind. The contrast between Governor Bouck and Governors Seward, Marcy, Dewitt Clinton, Silas Wright, and others who have occupied the executive chair of the state was as great as can well be imagined. He was of medium height, had small gray eyes and coarse, shaggy hair, which stood erect upon his head. He was well disposed, no doubt, but few persons, I venture to say, ever spent fifteen minutes in conversation with him who did not come to the conclusion that he was a mighty small pattern of a man for governor of the Empire state.

Daniel S. Dickinson—"Scripture Dick" he was sometimes called, on account of a penchant he had for quoting scripture while trying lawsuits—was a different type of man altogether. He was keen as a razor. I don't think he was a great statesman; but he was a politician of unusual adroitness, and possessed a very active brain, and was withal one of those men whom you could not well help liking. He was a trifle taller than Governor Bouck, and was gray from his youth; at least, his hair was white the first time I saw him, and later in life he wore it very long, which gave him the look of a patriarch. He was a state senator, lieutenant governor, U. S. senator, attorney general of the state, and would have liked to be president. My impression is, that he was smart rather than profound.

The convention which put in nomination Bouck and Dickinson adopted a tariff resolution which I recommend to the consideration of the level-headed of today.

Though adopted nearly forty years ago, I do not see how it could be improved upon. Compare it with the two-sided, clap-trap performances of our modern political jugglers.

RESOLVED, That we are the friends of a permanent tariff, sufficient to meet the wants of the government, economically administered and discriminating in its character, so as to afford protection to the mechanical and manufacturing, without burdening the agricultural and planting interests; and while we disapprove of some of the provisions of the present tariff, as being so high as to be prohibitory, and thus preventing revenue, we approve of the vote of our senator, Silas Wright, jr., he being compelled to vote for this bill or none, and his negative vote would have continued the horizontal tariff, taxing equally the necessities of the poor and the luxuries of the rich, and have left the government without adequate means to pay its debts, and the people of this great nation would have been disgraced in the eyes of the civilized world.

The legislature of 1842 contained some strong men. Ex-Governor Seymour was there, with Judge Church and ex-Judge Lott of Kings; also Mike Hoffman, "the old admiral," with his colleague, Mr. Loomis. George A. Simmons of Essex was another very strong man. Then there was Hathaway, a very talented and very *fast* young man from Chemung. John A. Dix, too, was there; likewise Chatfield of Otsego, who was the assembly's speaker, and afterwards attorney general of the state and member of the constitutional convention of 1846. It is not often that so much talent is found in the assembly in one year. I have known most of these men more or less intimately. I recollect calling upon Mr. Hoffman when he occupied a seat in the house, in company with my friend, P. H. Agan of Syracuse. Both of us had great admiration for the Herkimer statesman, and we dropped in upon him to pay our respects. "The canals" were his hobby, especially the Erie. I think he did not take much stock in some of the laterals. Being told that I was from Oswego, he commenced at once catechizing me about the Welland canal. I had never seen the "improvement," and could answer his inter-

rogatories only in general terms. He wanted to know the size of the work, the length, width and lift of the locks, how large vessels could pass through; in short, there was no end to the information he wanted. I replied as well as I was able, but could not pretend to furnish the exact and specific details he desired, and so stated; whereupon the Herkimer gentleman, in an impetuous manner, broke out, "My God! you ought to know!" Mr. Hoffman was in poor health, tall and slim, dressed in sheep's gray; and I am inclined to think, after my larger knowledge of men and their idiosyncracies, a good deal of a crank.

In the senate there were such men as Erastus Corning of Albany, Lyman Sherwood of Wayne, A. B. Dickinson of Allegany, William Ruger and Henry A. Foster of this district, and Robert Dennison of Orange—all more or less distinguished in their way.

Erastus Corning, I think, was one of the greatest men we have ever had. He was at the head of one of the heaviest mercantile houses in the state, a very large farmer and manufacturer, president of the New York Central railroad and member of congress, all at one time. Most men would consider that there was enough in any one of these positions to occupy one's whole time, but he looked after them all faithfully and intelligently. He was a man of great executive ability. Yet he had but one foot that ever touched the ground. He always used a crutch, and could not walk without it.

A. B. Dickinson was an uncultured product of the western part of the state, a verbose talker, but naturally a strong man. He was an ardent whig, and never allowed the deliberations of the senate to become dull and tedious while he was around.

The New York delegation to congress, chosen in 1842, embraced several well-known characters, such as Henry C. Murphy, J. Phillips Phoenix, Moses G. Leonard,

Hamilton Fish, Richard D. Davis, David L. Seymour, Charles S. Benton, Preston King, Orville Hungerford, Samuel Beardsley, George Rathbun, William A. Moseley and Washington Hunt.

Judge Scovill was elected to the senate from this district the same fall. The members of assembly from this county were Elihu C. Church, Joseph Graves and Job Lamson. St. Lawrence returned Calvin T. Hulburd and George Redington. Lewis elected Amos Buck ; Oswego, William F. Allen and Alban Strong.

## CHAPTER XIII.

How Albany Was Reached Forty Years Ago—Judge Scovil of Lewis County—He Describes Judge Ruger—Democratic Divisions—The Writer Against Forestalling the Party—Against Van Buren's Nomination—A Chapter in Chautauqua Politics.

A journey to Albany from northern New York, forty years ago, was a totally different affair from one of today. Legislators, when there were fewer railroads and no riding upon free passes, were accustomed to meet for the transaction of business the first Monday in January, and remain at the state capital until their work was concluded. There was no adjourning over from Friday noon to the Monday evening following, but the legislature remained in session from Monday A. M. to Saturday P. M., and performed its duties with far greater assiduity, fidelity and intelligence than in our day. Legislation was diligent attention to the public business forty and fifty years ago ; now it is a good deal of a farce.

Mr. Levi H. Brown has placed in my hands a letter from Hon. C. P. Scovil, of Lowville, written in February last, which justifies the remark with which this article is prefaced, that trips to and from the state capital forty years ago were by no means as comfortably made as at present. Referring to an old bill he had sent to Hon. William Ruger, Judge Scovil says :

“I knew Mr. Ruger very well while he was in the senate. The first year of his term I was in the assembly, and in the fall of 1842 I was elected to the senate, and was with him there until the time of his death. Mr. Ruger's wife was with him in Albany during the winter of 1843, and on our return at the close of the session we left



Utica about 3 P. M. in the old mud wagon of those days. Mr. Ruger and his wife occupied the back seat, Amos Buck, member from Lewis, his niece and myself had the middle seat, while Preston King and George Redington, of St. Lawrence mounted the front seat with the driver. The roads were alternately snow drift and mud, and we were out some half dozen times hunting up rails with which to pry up the wagon ; sometimes going twenty or thirty rods to find them, there being a board fence on each side of the wagon road. Just before we arrived at the Black River house we turned over, injuring Mr. Buck badly, and at sunrise in the morning, (for we traveled all night,) as we were turning up to the old Boonville house, four miles from Boonville, we went over again, breaking Redington's arm and injuring Buck and Mrs. Ruger so that when we got into the house Mrs. Ruger and Buck both fainted away, and we sent to Boonville for a physician.

"This was the last time I ever saw Mr. Ruger. When the senate, as a part of the old court for the correction of errors, met at New York in May, just before the session opened, news came of Ruger's death.

"Ruger was a safe legislator, a man of very decided ideas of right and wrong, and when his mind was once made up there was not much use trying to change his views. He was a democrat, and belonged to the 'barn-burner' wing of the party, and was decidedly radical on the subject.

"Time has done its work in the years since I left the senate. Of all the senators with whom I associated during the term of four years, I am not certain that there is one of them living at this time except the three senators from this district, Judge Foster, Judge Barlow and myself, and all of us have passed our eightieth year. Judge Foster, I think, is eighty-four or five. [He has since died.] Of my associates in the fifth district, Sumner



Ely of Otsego, Joshua A. Spencer of Oneida, George C. Sherman and William Ruger of Jefferson, and Enoch B. Talcott of Oswego have passed away a long time since, Mr. Sherman being the last of the number."

Diversity of sentiment, probably growing out of a conflict of interest, began to crop out in the democratic organization as early as 1843. Certain men in the party were characterized as radicals, and others as conservatives. Afterwards the latter were called hunkers and the former barnburners. The significance of these appellations, if they had any, I do not understand. The barnburner was supposed to be a more intense democrat than the hunker. The latter was for letting things alone, and being let alone, especially if he was in the enjoyment of office or political power. The names of the two factions imported much the same thing as stalwart and halfbreed, with this difference: the stalwart claimed to be a better republican than the halfbreed, and by virtue of the fact he wanted all the offices or the disposition of them; whereas the barnburners thought they were rather more devoted to the principles of democracy than the hunkers, and were therefore entitled to a fair share of the offices. In both cases I suspect the matter of the distribution of the spoils was at the bottom of the feuds, though of course no good party man has ever conceded this much. He will tell you that transcendantly important principles were at stake.

There were barnburners in the legislature of 1843, men who were dissatisfied with the appointments of Governor Bouck, who charged him with favoritism, with being under the influence of Edwin Croswell and others belonging to the Albany regency. There was considerable complaint, but no outbreak.

When Mr. Van Buren was defeated in 1840 the first impulse of his friends was to make him the standard

bearer of the party in 1844. But as time passed doubts were entertained as to the wisdom of the policy. Could he overcome the tremendous majority that had been piled up against him? Would people so soon forget the frightful stories that had been told about him? These and other questions in the same direction led many democrats to question the expediency of bringing him forward in the then coming campaign. I had doubts on the subject, and did not hesitate to express them. The democrats in the legislature of 1843 declared in favor of Mr. Van Buren, and advised that the national democratic convention be held in that year to designate the candidate. In my paper I opposed both these measures, maintaining that members of the legislature had no authority to name candidates for president, and insisting that there was no occasion for an early meeting of the national convention. I did not believe in forestalling the sentiment of the party; and declared in favor of the selection of delegates to the convention by districts, holding that districts had rights as well as states. For the avowal of these sentiments a packed convention passed a resolution of condemnation; but I had the satisfaction of seeing the convention put off to 1844, of seeing Mr. Van Buren shelved and a new man nominated; and I have lived long enough to see my ideas of the selection of delegates by districts instead of states adopted by the party with which it is my pleasure to act.

The democrats of Jefferson county, in 1843, nominated for members of assembly, Samuel Bond of Adams, William Carlisle of Lyme, and Eli West of Wilna. For sheriff, Herman Strong was named, and for county clerk Charles B. Hoard—all of whom were elected.

To the senate, from the fifth district, Thomas Barlow of Madison was chosen, with George C. Sherman of Jefferson to fill vacancy occasioned by death of William Ruger. Lewis elected to the assembly Alburn Foster;

St. Lawrence, Calvin Hulburd and George Redington ; Oswego, William F. Allen and Alvan Strong.

Among the members of assembly elected in 1843 are the names of two democrats from the county of Chautauqua. As this was not a very common occurrence, perhaps I shall be pardoned for stating how the thing happened. That county, from the time the party was organized, was overwhelmingly whig. To secure a nomination from a whig convention was equivalent to an election. So extraordinary efforts were made to obtain a nomination. Office-seekers were busy for months "fixing things." I need not go into details. This sort of work has become common almost everywhere.

Well, in 1843 there was a gentleman of the name of Plumb, who desired the nomination of county clerk. He had been unfortunate in business, but was a man of brains, integrity and grit. Orrin McCluer wanted to be sheriff; he was an excellent man, but not a fighter. These gentlemen submitted their claims to the county convention; but "the machine" was too much for them. Its managers had everything their own way, as they had had in previous years. Plumb and McCluer were laid out in the convention. Then they held a council of war, Plumb being the ruling spirit. A "People's Convention" was called, to which democrats as well as disgruntled whigs were invited. It was held pursuant to notice. Plumb was nominated for clerk, and McCluer for sheriff. For the assembly, two democrats were designated and one whig. There was no difficulty in finding the democrats; but whigs were scarce who were willing to take a nomination on the bolting ticket. The position was offered to a score of persons who had for years been dying to go to the legislature, but none of them would touch it. Finally a gentleman named Waters, who had gone to Massachusetts to reside, was given the nomination, and the ticket was completed. It was a lively fight

—on the part of the whigs ; and the democrats were glad to see the thing go on. Among the instrumentalities employed against the old-liners was what was called “the slate,” which professed to give the nominations to be made by the whig party for several years ahead. Of course it was all guess work, but the guessing was so good that large numbers of whigs believed that such a “slate” had been arranged, and deemed it but right that it should be smashed. The “people’s ticket” was chosen by several hundred majority.

There was some very extraordinary voting in the election. Plumb resided in Jamestown, as did one of the nominees for member of assembly on the regular ticket, an old lawyer and one of the most reputable men in the county. The town, which had ordinarily given the whig ticket from 200 to 300 majority, gave over 500 against it this year. In fact, the town was nearly unanimous for the bolting ticket, and the regular nominee for member received less than a hundred votes, when he should have had five or six hundred. So disgusted was he that on the morning after the election he called at the office of his newspaper and ordered it discontinued, declaring that, judging from the vote he had received, his townsmen must regard him as “no better than a common thief !”

The whig who had removed from the state did not learn of his nomination until after his election. In January he came on to Albany, and remained during the winter, and then went back to Massachusetts. He never returned to Chautauqua county to reside.

## CHAPTER XIV.

Election in 1844—The Canvass for President—Van Buren Shelved—Adoption of the Two-thirds Rule—James K. Polk Nominated—Nomination of Wright for Governor—His Speeches in the Campaign—General Nye on the Stump—Description of the Man and His Style of Speaking.

Politically speaking, the year 1844 was an exciting one. Up to the meeting of the democratic national convention, in May, the friends of Mr. Van Buren entertained strong hopes of his nomination. His own state was solidly and tenaciously for him in the convention. His friends had control of "the machine," and they spared no effort to make him the candidate. They may have supposed that he would be chosen if nominated, or they may have preferred defeat with him to success with some other man. Meantime, there was a large element in the party that questioned the policy of his nomination, doubting if he would be elected if nominated. It was made up of men who wanted to win. They had no objection to Mr. Van Buren, but, remembering his crushing defeat in 1840, and knowing that the whigs were prepared to employ the same weapon that had proved so effective in that year, they deemed it an act of prudence to let him stand aside, and to bring into the field some one against whom little could be said. These men were busy for months, and when the convention met they used whatever influence they possessed to effect their purpose. The convention, when it assembled, was for Mr. Van Buren. This fact was known. So before the convention came to a vote, it took the precaution to pass a resolution, 148 to 116, requiring the nominee to have two-thirds of all the votes



cast to entitle him to a nomination. This "cooked Mr. Van Buren's goose." When the voting commenced he had a clear majority over all. The first ballot stood :

For Van Buren.....	146
“ all others.....	130

Van Buren's majority.....	16
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On the next ballot Van Buren's vote fell to 127, and finally ran down to 99. His most formidable competitor was General Cass, who received 123 votes on the eighth ballot; yet it was evident that none of the candidates voted for could command the required two-thirds vote.

Great excitement prevailed in the convention; the two-thirds rule was vigorously protested against by a delegate from Ohio, after which an adjournment was had to enable the convention to cool off.

On the following morning James K. Polk was developed as a candidate, and on the second ballot received a unanimous nomination at the hands of the convention.

This same rule has been adhered to by the democracy ever since, I believe, and shows how completely subservient the party is to the south and all its requirements. Had the slave oligarchy insisted that the nominee should receive a unanimous nomination, would the northern democracy have rebelled?

The selection of Mr. Polk was regarded as a happy one by the great body of the party; and one of the liveliest campaigns followed that I have ever witnessed. The democrats now assumed the offensive, and waged a very aggressive fight. They charged their opponents with breaking all their promises, knowing perfectly well that John Tyler had put it out of their power to keep them had they been ever so much inclined. The brilliant Clay was the candidate of the whig party, and both he and his friends felt that it was "now or never" with them, and they made a tremendous fight. There was song-singing

during this campaign, but both parties engaged in it. Both parties did their utmost to stir up their friends to action. The whigs planted themselves squarely in favor of the doctrine of protection, and declared against the annexation of Texas. The democrats took the other side, and the issues were more thoroughly discussed than they are apt to be in our campaigns. Of course there was a good deal of blackguard, but there was also solid argument. Some doubt was felt as to how New York might vote, in consequence of which Silas Wright, jr., who then represented the state in the United States senate, was prevailed upon to accept a nomination for governor, and during the summer and fall he addressed large audiences in various portions of the state, confining himself chiefly to the discussion of the tariff question. There are those living who well remember his speech in Watertown. Mr. Wright was not an orator in the common acceptation of the word, but his style of argument was plain and truthful and such as to carry conviction. He wielded immense power with an audience. His candidature for governor and his speeches on the tariff question did more to save the state and secure the election of Mr. Polk than anything else.

Three times within my memory the tariff question has occupied a prominent place in the issues of the campaign, to wit : in 1832, when Mr. Clay ran against General Jackson ; in 1844, when the same gentleman was in nomination against Mr. Polk ; and in 1884, when Mr. Blaine was the republican nominee in opposition to Mr. Cleveland. The result in these different campaigns has been the same : the champion of protection has been defeated. I make no comment upon the facts, but leave them to speak for themselves. [This was written in 1885.]

It was during this campaign of 1844 that I made the acquaintance of General James W. Nye, one of the most gifted orators the state has ever produced. I have heard



him characterized by gentlemen competent to express judgment upon such matters as the most telling campaign speaker in America. While I would not say just that, for I think he lacked one thing to make him an effective speaker, viz : entire sincerity, I do not hesitate to say that if he had always felt clear down to the bottom of his heart the sentiments uttered ; if he had felt deeply, as did William Lloyd Garrison and Joshua R. Giddings and others of that stamp, he would have been without an equal.

But, considering his education, or the character of it, for the little he had he acquired at Homer academy and in driving stage for his brother, and so came in contact with the lower strata of society, he was a remarkable man. His brother Joseph, who was engaged in the mercantile business in Chautauqua county, often spoke to me of the wonderful gifts of his brother, but, because of the relationship, I considered it probable that he entertained exaggerated notions with regard to the General, and so received his statements with a great deal of allowance.

Well, some time in the summer of the year already mentioned the General was advertised (with others) to address six meetings in the leading villages of Chautauqua county. He was sent by the state committee, I think ; and as this was the first time he had ever taken the stump outside of his own neighborhood, he appeared at his best. At that time he was probably not far from thirty years of age, and one of the finest-looking men one ever set eyes on. He was a little below six feet in height, and very perfectly formed ; that is, he was neither fat nor lean, but his limbs were well rounded and handsome. He was dressed neatly—wore a black coat, white vest and dark pantaloons, and his boots were either patent leather or polished with scrupulous care. His fine head, on which there was a luxuriant growth of

jet black hair, cut in fashion, was covered by a white hat, on which there was a black band. His eyes were dark, full of expression, reflecting all the emotions of his nature. He could look very earnest and sober, but the general expression of his countenance was that of good nature. His was a benevolent face. His speech was tender and touching, his talk kindly and winning.

The speech he made was probably a prepared one in the outset, for it was perfect every way. As an argument it was faultless ; it was about the right length, and had enough of humor to please, and not so much as to offend. It was a model campaign speech. It was compact, and yet it covered the whole ground. He first delivered it Monday afternoon ; it captivated all who heard it. He moved on to the town where he was next advertised, and a good part of the crowd went with him. No such man as General Nye had ever spoken in those parts. His fame went ahead of him, and the masses turned out to hear him. Those who had heard him twice wanted to hear him again ; and even then they were not satisfied, they must hear him once more ; and so the thing went on till his week was up. The last meeting he addressed was the largest of any of them ; it was a mass gathering, a perfect jam, and consisted, to a large extent, of those who had heard him over and over again. It seemed as if the people could not be satisfied.

Of course, the speech given to this audience was far inferior to the first delivered in the county. The fact that so many of the same men were before him day after day was exceedingly embarrassing ; so he sought to vary it, and in so doing often seriously impaired the argument ; and realizing that a story repeatedly told lost much of its interest when given to the same audience, he introduced new illustrations. He made a mistake in this. He should have given his auditors the same speech, and not weakened it for the sake of imparting variety.

Among his illustrations was one I am sure no one who listened to it will ever forget. I have already stated that the tariff question was a leading one in the canvass, and the General was talking about the price of wool. It appears that under the tariff which the whig congress was unable to pass, but which went through by the help of Senator Wright and a few other democrats, the price of wool had advanced, but not in proportion to articles manufactured therefrom. So the General sent a wool grower, with his little crop of wool on his back, to the manufacturer to trade it for cloth. He read upon the door of the mammoth establishment, "No admittance except on business." This admitted the wool raiser. The General related the interview between the producer and the manufacturer at length and in his happiest style. He was gratified to find that the price of wool had risen, but rather chopfallen when he found cloth had taken a decidedly upward turn, and that he would obtain a less amount of it for his clip of wool than he had under the old tariff. All the details of the trade were carefully stated; and then the General went with the farmer to his home, and, gathering his wife and children around him in the evening, he gave the result of his visit to the manufactory. He told his wife that he had not received as much cloth for his wool as he had the previous year, and that she would have to economize in making up the garments, for they must be "cut according to the cloth, you know;" "you must pinch a little here and a little there; you must make the sleeves a little smaller, and for the boys you will have to make roundabouts." And drawing himself up to his full height, and striking at the skirts of his coat as if to cut them from that garment, the General exclaimed: "That is precisely what there is of your improved tariff; *it takes the skirts right off from your coats!*" His acting was so perfect and life-like that one might see the skirts fly from the coat he wore.

I saw much of the General afterwards. We tried to send him to congress from the Oswego district in 1848; and Oswego warmly seconded the effort, giving him a majority of 500 or 600, but his own county, Madison, gave a larger one against him, and thus left him at home. I expect again to refer to him in future articles, for in his way he was an extraordinary man.

Jefferson county elected to the assembly, in 1844, Lysander H. Brown, Azel W. Danforth and Edward S. Salisbury. Lewis elected Dean S. Howard; St. Lawrence, Asa L. Hazelton and John L. Russell; Oswego, Thomas Skelton and Luny Thayer. To the senate: from the fifth district, Enoch B. Talcott of Oswego was chosen. To congress: from Jefferson district, Orville Hungerford was re-elected; from the St. Lawrence district, Preston King was re-elected; from the Oswego district, William J. Hough of Madison was chosen.

In the New York delegation there were several gentlemen who achieved more or less distinction; among them, Archibald C. Niven, Bradford R. Wood, Erastus D. Culver, Charles S. Benton, Timothy Jenkins, Stephen Strong, Horace Wheaton, George Rathbun, Martin Grover, William A. Mosely and Washington Hunt.

## CHAPTER XV.

Left Mayville—My Introduction to Fillmore by William H. Seward—A Word About Each—Horace Greeley and the Family—Went to Oswego—Its Appearance.

My connection with the newspaper in which I commenced editorial work terminated with the close of the campaign of 1844. I sold my printing establishment before the election and afterwards disposed of my real estate. Although my business had been a complete success, I was not satisfied with my location. The village was too small, and I did not discover that there was any chance for its growth or of its becoming a place of business importance. I now refer to Mayville, the county seat of Chautauqua county. It is charmingly situated at the head of Chautauqua lake, which it overlooks for nearly half its length, and moreover is the center of a large and thrifty county; otherwise it is of no special account. I spent a day there recently, and discovered that it was the same sleepy, dull town it was forty and fifty years ago. The streets could hardly have been more quiet had the day been Sunday. The remark of Stephen A. Douglass, in reference to Vermont, would apply here. It is "a good place to remove from," especially if one is engaged in the newspaper business and anywise ambitious. I thought so when I lived there, and I have not changed my opinion since. Yet I have many pleasant recollections of the little village. The people were kind to me, and overlooked my imperfections. William H. Seward and Millard Fillmore came up there one day. The former gave me an introduction to the latter, and the trio took seats upon the narrow



platform in front of the hotel, and discussed the affairs of the nation. Mr. Seward had not at that date reached the office of governor, and Mr. Fillmore had not been even thought of for vice president. Seward was a familiar man; put on no "scollops;" walked straight into your affections. Fillmore, on the contrary, with a pleasant face, was stiff and dignified. He was a large man, nearly six feet in height and broad-shouldered, weighing, I should say, about 200. He was good looking, and he knew it.

Horace Greeley used to visit me in Chautauqua. His parents resided in the same neighborhood with mine; there was only the "state line" between them. His parents lived just south of the line, in Pennsylvania, mine close to the line on the New York side. I knew the Greeleys very well at an early day; I knew Zack Greeley, the father of Horace, a small, sandy-haired, sandy-whiskered man, with light eyes and colorless eyebrows; likewise his mother, a stout, hearty, fair-skinned, fleshy woman. I also knew his brother Barnes, who, I think, still occupies the premises which were purchased for his father by Horace. Likewise his sister Esther, who married J. F. Cleveland, for many years an industrious member of the Tribune staff, and compiler of the invaluable tables in the Tribune almanac; as well as Mrs. Bush, another sister, who still resides in the southwestern part of Chautauqua county. Neither the sisters nor the brother possess extraordinary talents. They are good sort of people, but lack energy and vigor. They are not thrifty. I think Horace had all the push there was in the family. He never gave himself an hour's rest so far as any one ever knew. The other members of the family never exerted themselves sufficiently to need rest. Mrs. Greeley, Horace's mother, was the brains of the party remaining at home, but she was easy-going and very much such a housekeeper as Horace was farmer.

Things had a fearfully slipshod look, both in Wayne, Pennsylvania, and at Chappaqua, N. Y.

Well, Horace, when visiting his parents, used to stop with me while I was in Chautauqua—never for any great length of time, for he was always in a prodigious hurry. He called to get a look at the latest papers, which he perused with avidity and care. One evening he took tea at my house. Some ladies happened to be present. He was given an introduction, but he exchanged no words with them; he was too busy talking politics to notice the visitors. I remember that my wife addressed to him the customary inquiry, "How will you have your tea, Mr. Greeley?" and received in response, "I will have a little milk and water and sugar and *no tea*." He talked incessantly; there was no let up, even for an instant. In eating he seemed to go for some particular article, and make a meal of it. On one occasion, finding a plate of gingerbread upon the table which suited his taste, he took the liberty of helping himself, and made way with nearly the whole of it; in fact, ate little else.

But I expect to have occasion to refer to "the great editor" at some length hereafter, and will go back to the subject under consideration when I started upon this digression.

After I had remained ten years in Chautauqua county, I concluded that *that* orange was pretty well squeezed, and that I had better try another. So I looked over all the most promising fields in the state—Watertown among others—and finally brought up at Oswego. I was induced to visit the town by the representations of Samuel Hawley, an ex-member of the legislature, and John W. Turner, a custom house officer there, I think, who were stopping at the same hotel in Albany I was staying at, and who gave me glowing pictures of Oswego's future. I listened to them attentively, and promised to visit the town on my return home. This promise I ful-



filled, stopping off at Syracuse, and leaving that village one bright May morning in 1845, reached Oswego just before night. The passage was made by canal, by a boat under command of the late Captain Stewart, for several years landlord of the Syracuse house. The section through which I traveled was all new to me, and I rather enjoyed it, in spite of the fact that an entire day was consumed in the journey. I stopped at the old Welland, then kept by Moses P. Hatch, afterwards a member of the state senate for a short term. Oswego at that period had an exceedingly ragged, unfinished appearance. There were one or two respectable business blocks, but the place as a whole looked tough. It looked as though it had seen hard times, as it had. First street, West Oswego, then the principal business street—at least, the largest share of the mercantile business was transacted there—contained some good stores, but many more wretchedly poor ones. However, all I met spoke well of Oswego's prospects, and I certainly thought that there was a *chance* for its improvement. I called on John Carpenter, the proprietor of the Palladium, made known my business, found he was willing to sell his establishment—he was then county clerk of the county—obtained his figures, struck up a bargain, and told him he might expect me about the first of June, if I did not notify him to the contrary when I should reach home. Sending him no word of that kind, I put in an appearance the first week in June, and took possession of the Palladium.

I confess that in coming to Oswego I desired to locate in a good-sized, thrifty village in some county in which the democrats were in the ascendant. The democratic party had been in a fearful minority in Chautauqua county, and I wanted to see how it would seem to advocate and vote for men who were expected to be chosen. I had taken an active part in the management of the

political affairs in the county I had left—being almost always a member of the county committee, and sometimes its chairman—and I was a little curious to know how I should feel to be engaged in a struggle where the party with which I was identified might now and then hope to secure the honors of office as well as the honor of naming candidates for it.

I, however, found that the running of a party newspaper in a county in which its political supporters were in the majority was not without its perplexities. The democratic party was more seriously divided at this time than I had supposed. There were radicals in the party, who were subsequently called barnburners, and there were conservatives, who were stigmatized as hunkers. All these terms were meaningless so far as I was concerned; I was a democrat, nothing more, nothing less. I came to Oswego to publish a democratic paper, not a factional one. This purpose I should have been glad to have adhered to; but events beyond my control prevented me from doing it. The political elements were already in a ferment; the democratic party almost immediately became involved in bitter quarrels, and these continued the greater part of the time I was connected with the Palladium. These quarrels I have already described at length elsewhere, and I need only add here that the paper remained steadfast to the principles of the party until the party allowed Silas Wright to be defeated for governor when in nomination in 1846. This act appeared to me so reprehensible that I did not hesitate to denounce it, and thereafter became what was known as a barnburner.

Jefferson county elected to the assembly in 1845, Henderson Howk, Elihu M. McNeil and Levi Miller; St. Lawrence elected Asa L. Hazeltine and Bishop Perkins; Oswego, Reuben Drake and Thomas Skelton; Lewis, Nelson J. Beach.

To the senate, from the fifth district, Joshua A. Spencer of Oneida was chosen.

The convention to revise the constitution assembled June 1, 1846. In that convention Jefferson county was represented by Azel W. Danforth, Alpheus S. Greene and Elihu M. McNeil ; St. Lawrence by Bishop Perkins, John Leslie Russell and Jonah Sanford ; Oswego by Sereno Clark and Orris Hart ; Lewis by Russell Parish.

The election which resulted in the defeat of Silas Wright as above stated gave the whigs the assembly and a majority of the congressional delegation from this state. The democrats elected their nominee for lieutenant governor, Addison Gardiner, and the new constitution, providing for the election of nearly all officers by the people, organizing the courts, etc., which was voted upon at the election, was adopted by a majority of 126,000.

Joseph Mullin was elected to congress from this district, Preston King from that of St. Lawrence, and William Duer from Oswego. At the second session of this congress Horace Greeley was a member, serving from the first Monday in December to the 4th of March.

Jefferson county elected to the assembly in that year (1846) John Boyden of Lorraine, Samuel J. Davis of Carthage and John D. Davidson of Theresa. Lewis elected Thomas Baker ; St. Lawrence, Phineas Atwater, Henry Barber and Bishop Perkins ; Oswego, Oren R. Earl and M. Lindley Lee.

To the senate, from the fifth district, Nelson J. Beach of Lewis was chosen.

## CHAPTER XVI.

The Blunder of Allowing Wright to be Defeated—Encomium on Silas Wright—The Preliminary Fight for the Control of the State Convention in 1847.

An inexcusable mistake was made by those democrats who were parties to the defeat of Mr. Wright. He was one of the noblest men the state has ever had. To ensure the election of Mr. Polk he had consented to resign his seat in the United States senate and take the nomination of governor. That he endeavored to so discharge the duties of the gubernatorial office as to keep the party intact, will not be questioned. If he erred it was in being too conciliatory ; he tried to satisfy both the radicals and the conservatives. He was an ardent democrat, and was reluctant to pursue a policy which would tend to divide his political friends. He was renominated almost without opposition, and he should have received the cordial and earnest support of the party ; but the conservatives stealthily organized, and cast a sufficient number of votes against him to secure his defeat.

This was a stupid blunder. Mr. Wright was entitled to better treatment. He had labored earnestly to promote the welfare of his party, and the party should have stood by him—stood by him as one man. Some of the party, however, thought differently—at least acted differently—and coalesced with the whigs and allowed John Young to be chosen. They should have known that they were making a fearful mistake, that Mr. Wright's friends would take his defeat seriously at heart, and very likely be inclined to avenge the wrong. They should have known that they were striking a blow at the vitals of the

party; that they were creating a breach that it would be difficult to heal.

For Mr. Wright was one of the foremost men in the land—"the Cato of America" he was styled by some one. He was a statesman. He was not as much of a politician as Mr. Van Buren; he was not an adept at planning campaigns; he had little skill in the handling of men; but as a statesman he had few or no superiors. He was a strong man because he was earnest and honest and sensible. He was a man of the people; he was familiar with their interests and faithful to them. He put on no airs; common people called him Silas; felt at ease in his presence, for he talked of things that they understood, and in a way that interested them. His speeches were plain talks addressed to the common sense of his fellow citizens. He was a young man when he was elected to the United States senate, a young man, comparatively speaking, when he died, (52 years of age,) yet he ranked among the ablest men in that body. He was a statesman because he was well versed in the affairs of the state and nation, and competent to discuss the various questions arising in the national legislature. He served his country and state to oblige the people composing the same, and not because he derived any particular satisfaction from holding office. He was willing to be where he could do the most good for his fellow men. No doubt the practice of law in the little village of Canton, in which he labored to discourage litigation, not to encourage it, would have been quite as congenial to his tastes as public employment, but the people pressed him into their service immediately upon his arrival in St. Lawrence, and kept him in their employ until he was retired by the treacherous conduct of his own friends in 1846. He was one of the purest, most upright and unselfish men that have been honored with office in the state. No stain of any kind rests on his name. A great



many of our public men have their bad traits as well as good ones, their vices and their meannesses; but if Silas Wright ever had any, the fact has never been mentioned by any one. In this respect, he stood head and shoulders above all the men of his time.

He was a man of powerful frame; he was not very unlike Webster in size, a little larger, I should say, with a massive brain and a clear intellect. He impressed all who came in contact with him, as did the Massachusetts statesman, with the greatness and strength of his mental powers.

Mr. Wright died, in the zenith of his fame, in August, 1847, of apoplexy. He was in usual health in the morning, and before noon he had passed away. His death was deeply mourned by the people of St. Lawrence, and the radical democracy throughout the state felt very much as did the friends of Garfield when he was shot down by Guiteau. Both felt that a good man had fallen. True, Mr. Wright had not been cruelly murdered in the manner Garfield was, but his friends felt that he should have been saved from the mortification of defeat, and that if he had been continued in the office of governor he might quite possibly have lived. This feeling was greatly intensified by the declarations of the conservative journals that it would not answer to renominate Mr. Flagg, a pronounced friend of Mr. Wright, for the office of comptroller, in the expectation that he would be chosen.

In the face of these warnings the caucuses and conventions were held in the different counties. In most of them there was an animated, and anything but a friendly contest. The strong men of the party were chosen on both sides. A good share of these men were good speakers, and back of them there was a class who were prepared for any emergency, to get up a row and engage in a fight upon very slight provocation. The great body

of delegates were either hunkers or barnburners, and all were in fighting trim. They considered that the day of conciliation had passed, and such terms as "union" and "harmony" had become obsolete.

When the convention assembled it was doubtful which faction was in the ascendant. A barnburner from one of the western counties, meeting John Cramer of Saratoga in the street an hour previous to the meeting of the convention, said to him, "I think the convention is ours." Cramer replied :

"In that event we will beat you in the execution," meaning that if the hunkers were out-voted in the convention they would beat the ticket at the polls.

The truth is, the convention was very evenly divided ; so the hunkers (it was said) contested the seats of a sufficient number of barnburners to obtain control of the organization, and ultimately of the convention itself. All politicians understand how this is done. Only those are allowed to vote in the organization whose seats are uncontested. In this way a minority is sometimes able to control the majority. The barnburners declared that they were defeated in the convention by this device. They were certainly out-generaled.



## CHAPTER XVII.

The Democratic State Convention in 1847—A Terrible Contest Between the Hunkers and Barnburners—Triumph of the Former.

I think I have already stated that the individual who did not attend the democratic state convention held in Syracuse in 1847 has a very imperfect idea of the manner in which a public body can be wrought up to the highest pitch of excitement. All the delegates were in a fighting mood when they assembled. The hunkers refused to make the slightest concession; possibly they were not asked to concede anything; while the barnburners failed to perceive that the party could be of any service to them if their friends were to be stricken down whenever they were candidates for any position. The hunkers had taken their position and were immovable; the barnburners insisted on having their rights at any cost.

I think it had been arranged that two persons should represent the interests of the two factions in the convention, at least, at the outset, namely: Robert H. Morris of New York, who was to speak for the hunkers, and Preston King of St. Lawrence, who represented the barnburners. They were sort of chairmen—I forget what they were called—but they put motions and obtained the sense of the delegates as well as they were able. It was here that I first saw Preston King to know him. He resembled Jack Falstaff in figure; he was short and thick, with a short neck and broad shoulders and round face, which was generally illuminated by a broad grin. He appeared the embodiment of good nature; he had eyes which laughed, and a countenance which made you hap-

py to look at ; and how in creation a man of his make-up should have ever been troubled with the "blues ;" how he should have become disheartened and tired of life ; how he should have grown misanthropic, and put an end to his existence, is a problem I cannot undertake to solve. Some of our greatest humorists, I believe, never laugh, and it may be true that those who are given to much laughing have their seasons of sadness and depression. So Mr. King may have dwelt throughout his life in close proximity to an atmosphere of darkness and gloom. Mr. Morris was a pleasant-looking man, dignified, and so lame that he carried a crutch or cane. These gentlemen preserved their temper from the beginning to the end of the convention, and they were about the only delegates that did.

I had the impression that Mr. King and Mr. Morris, with three persons who were appointed tellers, were the principal officers of the convention, but I notice, by referring to the proceedings, that it was properly officered the second day ; and I do know that the convention which assembled on Wednesday forenoon did not get to business until Saturday night and that it did not finish its labors until near Sunday.

The main thing was to determine who were and who not members of the convention. The seats of eleven delegates were contested. Committees were appointed and the cases referred. The facts were simple in most cases, but some of them were complicated and the testimony conflicting. So considerable time was consumed in their investigation. The committees were busy Thursday, Friday and a good part of Saturday, reports being submitted and acted on as fast as they were ready. It was soon apparent that the hunkers had control of the convention.

The convention took a recess for supper on Friday, and reassembled in the evening. The barnburners were

in no amiable mood. They had been curbing their feelings. Whatever they may have thought they had hesitated to give utterance to their sentiments in the convention; but they could not hold in longer. The committee to whom was referred the cases of John Van Buren and Peter Cagger, in Albany, reported in favor of admitting the latter, and against the former. General Wadsworth called for the testimony in the case of Cagger, which contained an affidavit stating that one of the delegates to the district convention, who had been elected as the friend of Cagger, had been offered \$75, and afterwards \$100, to vote against him. Mr. Wadsworth considered it due the convention and the democracy of the state that these facts be known. A hunker delegate replied that inasmuch as the committee had reported in favor of giving the seat to Cagger, it was not worth while to trouble the convention with the testimony submitted to the committee.

Then there arose a strong demand for the reading of the affidavit on the part of the barnburners.

The floor was first taken by George Rathbun of Auburn, a tall, black-eyed lawyer, who spoke slowly, but with tremendous force and effect. John Van Buren then made one of his laughter-provoking speeches. Then James R. Doolittle, afterwards U. S. senator from Wisconsin, delivered a very telling speech. James T. Brady, one of the most brilliant lawyers of New York, replied. He was followed by James C. Smith, now supreme court judge in the seventh district, who made an argumentative speech, bristling with telling points against the hunkers. E. G. Lapham, late U. S. senator, followed on the same side, delivering one of his most forcible speeches. Lapham was a strong man when thoroughly aroused, and he was wide awake and impressive on this occasion. Then George Rathbun arose a second time, and fired hot shot into the hunker camp for fifteen minutes in a manner which was perfectly terrific.

These speakers started off coolly, but each became more and more excited as he progressed, until there was no effort to conceal their hatred of the opposing faction and the men composing it. The contents of the affidavit were recited at length by all these men, and Mr. Rathbun proposed to make it part of his speech.

A good deal was said about doing justice to Mr. Wright. A hunker suggested that it was too late for anything of that kind; Mr. Wright's remains were peacefully reposing in the soil of St. Lawrence; when General Wadsworth, a man of powerful frame, with long arms, arose, and, shaking his extended finger at the hunker leaders, exclaimed: "It may be too late to do justice to Silas Wright, but, thank God, it is not *to his assassins!*"

And so the angry fight went on, all the time growing hotter and hotter. Mr. Brady and Horatio Seymour made an effort to parry the blows struck by the barn-burners; but that only added to the fury of the assaulting party. They rehearsed the offences of the hunkers from the inauguration of the Albany regency to their last outrage, the attempt to bribe a delegate to vote against Mr. Cagger, and then to suppress the fact by giving him his seat without making a report.

Finally, a hunker exclaimed, at the top of his voice: "Let them read their d——d affidavit!" No pen can describe the scenes of that Friday evening.

There was a greater storm in the hall Saturday night, about the time the nominations were made, when the scene resembled Pandemonium more than a convention. In the worst part of it, when everybody was upon his feet and generally standing on the seats, the tall form of John Van Buren loomed up in the thickest of the disturbance. Referring to the fact that he had just been indicted in Albany county for disorderly conduct at a political convention in New Scotland, he screamed, in his piping voice, "Mr. President, it appears to me that we

are getting into a bit of a row ; *we shall all be indicted !*” This created an immense laugh, and comparative order was secured for a while.

I realize my incompetency to convey to the reader any adequate idea of the doings of the excited assemblage. It must have been in session something like fifty hours, and they were hours of the most intense excitement from the opening to the close. A ticket was made, headed by the late Orville Hungerford of Watertown for comptroller, but it was ignored by the barnburners, and defeated by an overwhelming majority. The democratic party was rent asunder. It is true that some efforts were made to get the fragments together, but all in vain. The barnburners professed to be actuated by principle, and perhaps were. I have always thought that “they builded wiser than they knew.”

In 1846, to a bill in congress making an appropriation to negotiate a peace with Mexico, David Wilmot, a democratic representative from Pennsylvania, offered an amendment known as the Wilmot proviso, “that there shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in any territory on the continent of America, which shall hereafter be acquired by or annexed to the United States by virtue of this appropriation, or in any other manner whatsoever, except for crime,” &c. This provision was adopted by the house, but defeated in the senate. There were a great many democrats at the north who believed it was right. They did not think slavery ought to be extended, and said so.

Accordingly, at the convention I have been speaking of, David Dudley Field, then a young lawyer in New York, offered this resolution, which the hunkers voted down :

“RESOLVED, That while the democracy of New York, represented in this convention, will faithfully adhere to all the compromises of the constitution, and maintain all the reserved rights of the states, they declare—since



the crisis has arrived when that question must be met—their uncompromising hostility to the extension of slavery into territory now free, or which may be hereafter acquired by any action of the government of the United States.”

This resolution, which the hunkers rejected, was placed under the editorial head of the different barnburner journals in the state, headed by these words :

*“The stone which the builders rejected, the same shall become the head of the corner.”*

And were they not right ?

The resolution of Mr. Field became the corner stone of the platform adopted by the republican party. Indeed, it was the foundation upon which the grand old party was built, upon which it elected Abraham Lincoln president, upon which it prosecuted the war for the Union, and upon which it has stood to this hour. Those who went into this organization differed upon other questions, but they agreed upon this.

The barnburners, almost to a man, went into the republican organization, and they made the counties of St. Lawrence, Jefferson and Oswego the strong republican counties they have since continued.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

More about the Syracuse Convention—An Array of Strong Men—The Writer Acts with the Barnburners—The Herkimer Convention—Who Were There and What Was Done.

There was an extraordinary amount of talent in the democratic state convention held in 1847. Horatio Seymour was there, afterwards governor of the state; Rufus W. Peckham, subsequently a justice of the supreme court and judge of the court of appeals; C. C. Cambreleng, a distinguished member of congress; J. R. Doolittle, afterwards U. S. Senator from Wisconsin; Martin Grover, for many years judge of the court of appeals; E. G. Lapham, late U. S. Senator from New York; James C. Smith, now and for a long time a justice of the supreme court; David S. Broderick, afterwards U. S. senator from California; George Rathbun, of Auburn, for several terms a leading member of congress; James S. Wadsworth, a distinguished general in the late war, who lost his life in the battle of the Wilderness; Preston King, afterwards U. S. senator from New York; David Dudley Field, the well-known New York lawyer; Eugene Casserly, subsequently U. S. senator from California; besides Judge Monell, from one of the river counties; James T. Brady, one of the most brilliant lawyers of the city of New York; George P. Barker, of Buffalo, fifty years ago the finest speaker in western New York; Peter Caggar, a distinguished lawyer and politician in Albany; John Cramer, the old democratic war horse of Saratoga; John Stryker, who died at Rome a few years ago, and who for years was one of the most influential democratic politicians in the state;

Darius A. Ogden, of Yates county, afterwards canal commissioner, canal appraiser, &c. John Van Buren was elected to the convention, but his seat was contested and he was excluded. It will be seen that there was an array of strong men such as do not often get together in a single convention. Nor is it at all likely that the list given embraces the names of all who might properly be placed there. I mention such as I happen to recollect as acting conspicuous parts in the convention.

I was present as a spectator and reporter ; was there through the greater part of the performance, which lasted full four days, of twelve hours each, counting the sessions held in the evening, some of which lasted till 12 o'clock at night. I remember all the persons named about as well as if the convention had been held a week ago. A feeling akin to sadness comes over me when I reflect that almost all the actors in that memorable assemblage are sleeping in their graves ; at least, the bodies of most of them were consigned to earth long ago. I visited the monument erected to the memory of poor Broderick, who was shot in a duel which he unwisely allowed himself to be engaged in, in the cemetery overlooking the Golden Gate, a couple of miles outside San Francisco, when I was in California in 1882. It was one of the conspicuous objects in the beautiful grounds. Broderick was a stone-cutter by trade, if I remember right, large and awkward in person, a hard, harsh speaker, but possessed of much natural ability and good impulses.

Mr. Barker, of Buffalo, was one of the finest looking men in the convention, as he was perhaps the most charming speaker. He was tall and erect, and a captivating talker. This was his last appearance in any convention. He died the following January. Next to him was Mr. Brady, a somewhat smaller man, but a very graceful and easy speaker. He has been dead a good many years.

Caucuses were held by both factions when the convention was not in session. I attended those of the barnburners, and of course became acquainted with all the leaders. In fact, I was considered one of them. I remember inquiring at one of these gatherings what course the democratic editors were expected to pursue during the campaign, in case the barnburners should all be thrown overboard and an out-and-out hunker ticket nominated? John Van Buren replied, saying the barnburner papers should be devoted to literary reading. He assumed there would be no bolting the ticket; but he thought that news and miscellany should receive more attention than politics for a few weeks. Spoken in John's inimitable way, there was little room for mistaking the position he expected the organs of the barnburners to occupy with reference to the ticket which was likely to be nominated.

Up to this date I had been an intense and bitter partisan—as much so as can be found to-day in the ranks of either the present political parties. I considered the meanest, most disreputable democrat as being altogether preferable to any kind of a whig, for whigs were all alike in my estimation, thoroughly dishonest and unspeakably bad. So my party was to be upheld whatever it did, and the other was to be condemned and denounced, let it do what it would. But just now the democratic party had got by the ears. It was split asunder. It was composed of two factions. I could not go with both, but gave my adhesion to the one which appeared to me to be nearest right. I never was the friend of African slavery or any other. I was always in favor of equal rights to all. I never could see any reason why one man was not as good as another if he deported himself as well. I used to quarrel with the democrats, and tell them that they did not live up to their professions; that there was a good deal of aristocracy among them, based

upon the fact that some of them had enjoyed better advantages than others.

It came like pulling teeth to fight democrats ; but there appeared to be no alternative. To justify the acts of the barnburners, it became necessary to criticise, condemn and denounce the unreasonable conduct of the hunkers ; and I did it. I spread before my readers the proceedings of the Syracuse convention. I told them just how everything was done as well as I was able. I told the truth as I understood it ; and the result was that the great body of my readers went with me. I think the political press exerted an influence forty and fifty years ago that it does not wield today. Since the telegraph came into use newspapers publish the news to a much greater extent than formerly ; hence people see a good deal of both sides and form their own conclusions. They read what the editor has to say, and weigh it in the light of known facts, and sometimes reach conclusions exactly opposite to those he arrives at. People are more enlightened than they once were. There is less difference between the editorial writer and the ordinary reader than formerly existed. I am led to these observations by an occurrence happening that fall. Meeting a hunker friend from one of the eastern towns the day after the election, he expressed his opinion of me, and it was not at all complimentary, either. "Among your subscribers at our postoffice," said he, "there was scarcely one that would touch the democratic ticket when they came to the polls yesterday. In fact, we could tell who took the paper by their treatment of the ballot. Nearly all cut it."

With the great body of the barnburners I left the democratic camp at that time, and I have never found any good opportunity to return. Many of the notions of old-time democracy I heartily subscribe to, and I am unable to see how they conflict with the sentiments of the modern republican party. Jefferson was as much op-

posed to the extension of slavery to free territory as any member of the present republican organization ever was, and General Jackson was as strongly devoted to the preservation of the Union as Abraham Lincoln.

After the adjournment of the convention a democratic mass meeting was called at Herkimer the 26th of October. It was understood that the notice was smuggled into the columns of the Albany Atlas by Peter Cagger without the knowledge of the publishers. Nevertheless the meeting was held, and was well attended. It was addressed by David Wilmot, author of the Wilmot Proviso, by John Van Buren, Mr. Cambreleng of Suffolk, J. W. Taylor of Ohio, Mr. Kilbern of Albany, E. G. Lapham of Ontario, John Cochrane of New York, General Nye of Madison and Mr. Davis of Erie. John Van Buren made a speech which kept the audience in a roar of laughter from the beginning to the close. His opening words were, "Fellow citizens and—fellow traitors!" John could beat the world in ridicule and withering sarcasm, and on this occasion he was in his happiest mood. The speech was a side-splitter. David Dudley Field was there, and introduced a string of resolutions, which are very good reading today. They of course embraced the one which the hunkers had voted down at Syracuse, against the extension of slavery.

The meeting wound up by calling another at Utica on the 22d of February, 1848, which was held and was presided over by General Dix, if I remember right, when a regular organization of the barnburner forces was effected.

The democrats were badly beaten at the election. The senate stood 24 whigs to 8 democrats, and the assembly 95 whigs to 33 democrats.

Among the senators chosen was the late John W. Tamblin in this district, John Fine in St Lawrence, and Thomas H. Bond in Oswego.

Jefferson county was represented in the assembly by Benjamin Maxson, Harvey D. Parker and Fleury Keith ; St. Lawrence, by Charles G. Myers, John S. Chipman and Benjamin Holmes ; Oswego, by M. Lindley Lee and A. Z. McCarty ; Lewis, by David D. Reamer.



## CHAPTER XIX.

The Fight of the Factions—The Split at Baltimore—The Buffalo Convention—Van Buren and Adams Nominated—Birth of the Republican Party.

The barnburners were fortunate in one respect, they contended for a principle, viz.: the non-extension of slavery. Their quarrel with the hunkers grew out of the fact that they did not obtain just recognition in the party. The state had been for a long period in the hands of the democracy; the best positions were occupied by men who had been in them for a long time, and who considered that they were serving the people about as well as they could be served, (and this was probably true,) and they were reluctant to surrender their places. These men, to a large extent, controlled the affairs of the party, shaped its policy, and dictated its appointments. So the young men in the party did not have a fair show, either for political influence or the offices, (at least that was their impression,) and they were compelled to "go west" or remain in the background.

This state of things gave rise to the barnburner faction. Old men are generally loath to give up to the boys. They are apt to hold on as long as they can—sometimes to their own detriment. But there was a principle, an important principle, at stake in this matter. The young democrats declared for something beside political power and the offices; they were for freedom, for free territory and free men. They differed with the old men in the party who said "things are well enough as they are; nothing is to be gained by agitation; let well enough alone."

The young democrats did not subscribe to these opinions. Mr. Wilmot, of Pennsylvania, congressman and a worthy democrat, had offered an amendment to an appropriation bill which was intended to restrict slavery to its then existing limits, and it passed the house. The younger portion of the party approved this doctrine, and they adhered to it at Syracuse, adhered to it at Herkimer, and at Utica, adhered to it at all their meetings. It was the corner stone of their political faith. I never supposed they were any better men than the hunkers ; but they appeared to be actuated by principle—and some of them were—while the hunkers seemed to care as much for political influence and the offices as anything.

Had the leaders in the liberal republican movement in 1872 been able to show that the Grant administration had been faithless to some vital principle they might have made an issue with it that would have been very serviceable to them, but they were only able to say that they had been ignored in the distribution of official favors. They considered themselves quite as good republicans as the men who were getting all the offices, and raised a great outcry because they were neglected ; but the masses of the party looked upon this as a small matter, and declined to join in the fight against General Grant, which was, to a great extent, a personal one.

In February, 1848, the barnburner wing of the party met in Utica and organized. Delegates were appointed to the democratic national convention at Baltimore. The delegates for this district were Alpheus S. Greene and James F. Starbuck.

John Van Buren made a speech of tremendous power in the convention. I remember his declaring that if the American people could not be stirred on the great question of human freedom they could not be moved on any subject. All the leading barnburners were there, and a

great many of them made speeches. I had the honor of being one of the vice-presidents.

The hunkers held a convention (I think at Albany) and also appointed delegates to the national convention. So there were two sets of delegates from this state, both claiming to be regular. The convention voted to admit both, with authority to cast 36 votes, the number to which the state was entitled. This did not suit the barnburners, and they withdrew, and the convention nominated General Lewis Cass of Michigan, who was defeated, and General Taylor, the whig candidate, elected. The barnburners called a second convention at Utica, June 22d, at which Martin Van Buren was nominated for president.

This movement, with others of a similar character, occurring in various parts of the country about this time—for the political elements were in fearful commotion—led to the calling of the famous Buffalo convention, which was held the 9th of August, and was composed of the dissatisfied elements in all the political organizations. The leading barnburners were of course there. Mr. Henry B. Stanton, in his "Random Recollections," says they had been at Baltimore, and "made the monumental city lurid with their wrath, frightening the delegates from the back states almost out of their wits." They adjourned the conflict to the "Queen City of the Lakes." Though I was appointed a delegate to this convention, I was unable to be present, but Mr. Stanton was there, and was one of the committee that drafted its free soil platform. "It was," says Mr. Stanton, "a motley assembly. Inspired by loves and by hates, it was a curious mixture of incongruous elements. Old pro-slavery democrats were there to avenge the wrongs of Martin Van Buren. Free soil democrats were there to punish the assassins of Silas Wright. Pro-slavery whigs were there to strike down General Taylor because he had

dethroned their old idol, Henry Clay, in the Philadelphia convention. Anti-slavery whigs were there, breathing the spirit of John Quincy Adams. Abolitionists of all shades of opinion were present, from the darkest type to those of a milder hue, who shared the views of Salmon P. Chase. An immense tent was raised on the court-house square for the accommodation of the convention, where the crowds were regaled with speeches and music. Its real business was conducted by delegates in a church close at hand. There was a rooted prejudice against Mr. Van Buren among the whigs and abolitionists; but the adroit eloquence of his former law partner, Benjamin F. Butler of Albany, and an admirable free soil letter from the sage of Lindenwald himself, carried him through, and he was nominated for president, with Charles Francis Adams for vice president. The democratic revolt in New York gave its thirty-six electoral votes to Taylor and Fillmore, which was exactly their majority in the Union. The breach in the New York democracy has never been completely healed."

The platform was outspoken on the subject of freedom. The last resolution read :

"RESOLVED, That we inscribe on our banner, FREE SOIL, FREE SPEECH, FREE LABOR AND FREE MEN, and under it will fight on and fight ever, until a triumphant victory shall reward our exertions."

While the ticket failed to receive a single electoral vote, it was sustained by a large popular vote, as will be seen by these figures: In Maine it had 12,000, Vermont nearly 14,000, Massachusetts 38,000, Ohio 35,000, Michigan 10,000, Wisconsin 10,000, Pennsylvania 11,000. In New York it received 120,510, or 6,192 more votes than were given for General Cass. Of the vote for Van Buren in this state something like one hundred thousand must have been cast by the barnburners, few of whom ever returned to the democratic fold to stay. An effort was made to reconcile the differences in the party, and it was

so far successful that both factions did support, or pretended to support, Franklin Pierce for president in 1852, but the soldering did not stick, and Pierce was no sooner declared elected than the fight broke out anew, and with greater violence than ever. The truth is, that having thrown off their allegiance to the slave power, the barn-burners could not well return ; and most of them went into the republican organization when it was founded in 1855. That party was made up of anti-slavery men, whigs and democrats and old abolitionists. Probably the largest share of the capital of the new concern was contributed by the whigs, but they were not in at the outset. The old anti-slavery men were at the bottom of the concern, the free soil democrats came in next, and finally the anti-slavery whigs. Previous to 1856 the national platforms of both the democrats and whigs were altogether pro-slavery. This much is stated for the purpose of giving credit where credit is due. There are those who appear to think the republican party identical with the old whig party, but this is a mistake. The party last named was as strongly pro-slavery as the democratic ; even as late as 1856, when Millard Fillmore was in nomination for president as a pro-slavery whig, he received 124,604 votes in this state, or considerably more than half the number cast for Scott in 1852.

The republican party, when organized, really had but one plank in its platform. It was against the spread of slavery. There were a good many notions in both the old parties that the new party would not have subscribed to, and had they been insisted on the party would not have been formed. Those who went into it considered the issue then presented, viz : whether freedom or slavery should rule this country, paramount to all others, and they postponed the consideration of all minor questions until the main one should be settled.

In 1848 Charles E. Clarke was chosen to congress from this district, Preston King from that of St. Lawrence, and William Duer from that of Oswego.

In the assembly, from Jefferson county, George Gates, John L. Marsh and Bernard Bagley were chosen. From St. Lawrence, Harlow Goddard, Justus B. Pickit and Noble S. Elderkin ; Oswego, Henry Fitzhugh and Edward W. Fox ; Lewis, Diodate Pease.



## CHAPTER XX.

Horace Greeley's Wit, Roscoe Conkling's Sarcasm, and John Van Buren's Ridicule—Three Like but Unlike Men—Some Stories of "Prince John."

In the quarrels in the democratic organization—which I have dwelt upon at possibly too great length, and my apology is, if any is required, that they contributed very materially to the inauguration of the republican party—John Van Buren, sometimes called "Prince John," because he was the son of President Van Buren, was a conspicuous figure. He possessed a remarkable intellect. He was one of the most brilliant men I have ever known, and I doubt if the state has ever had his superior. He was of the same temperament as Horace Greeley and Roscoe Conkling—nervous-sanguine, with light hair and blue eyes and complexion as soft and fair as that of a woman—and resembled these great men in some respects. He was about their size in middle life, weighing something like two hundred pounds. He was full six feet in height, and well built. "Prince John" never was called a handsome man, as Mr. Conkling has been, nor remarkably plain, as Mr. Greeley was. He had a large head, his hair was thin, and had he lived to be as old as the other gentlemen I have named, he would probably have been as bald. He stooped slightly; Mr. Greeley very much; Mr. Conkling not at all—in fact, he leaned backward if not greatly belied.

Mr. Greeley was no orator, was not a good speaker even, but the matter was in him, and he could not speak without saying something, without interesting his auditors. He was a magazine of facts and robust thoughts, and he never spoke but to enlighten and in-

struct. He was a great wit, though he probably never undertook to say a smart thing in his life. He said cute things because he could not help it. They escaped his lips before he was aware of it. No man excelled him at repartee or in the command of language. I recall those words; that is saying a great deal. I was going to remark, no man ever excelled him in the use of adjectives except Roscoe Conkling. I am not sure but Roscoe would beat him in expressive words, terms and phrases. He was terrific against an object of his dislike. If words would crush a man he would annihilate him. "That lizzard on the hill," referring to Governor Cornell. Could anything be more expressive? He was sometimes so cruel that his thrusts reacted; they harmed him more than they did the victim. "Prince John" ran less to adjectives, wicked, merciless, stinging adjectives, and more to ridicule. He would hold up the object of his assault in the most grotesque and hideous light, and let all the world laugh at him. He was as quick at repartee as Mr. Greeley, and as keen. His gifts were natural gifts. It was as natural for him to say a laughable thing as it was to breathe. He couldn't make a stupid speech. He couldn't say a stupid thing. He differed from Mr. Conkling in this—there was no malice in his nature; I don't know that Mr. Conkling meant to be the savage he sometimes appeared; probably he did not; I should be sorry to think he did. Mr. Van Buren apparently had no ill will toward any one; but he did like to make fun of those he disliked, to hold them up to derision, and he would do it more effectively than any man I ever knew.

He was quite as easy a speaker as Mr. Conkling; I think he spoke a little more fluently; and he never hesitated an instant either for ideas or words in which to express them. Every sentence uttered was perfect in itself, and no amount of time spent upon it in the way of re-

vision would have improved it. He wrote without the least effort, and spoke in the same way. His voice was rather shrill, but so melodious that it was pleasant, and could be heard distinctly in the largest hall. He secured the attention of his auditors from the outset, and held it till he had finished, whether he spoke briefly or at length. He made a strong argument, could be very impressive, though he never indulged in the pathetic. He was brim-full of humor, and if there was anything absurd in the position of his antagonist, he was sure to discover it and make the most of it. He was as quick, as keen, as bright and as logical as either of the men I have likened him to. I think he was their peer in intellectual power. He was an excellent lawyer, and astonished both the bench and the bar when he appeared before the supreme court of the United States with his great capacity and legal acumen. He was a match for the strongest lawyers. He had an extraordinary memory. Here is an instance of it: When in the prime of life he was engaged as counsel in an important case in Rensselaer county, lasting something like two weeks. He took no notes, and when out of court spent his time in haunts from which he should have kept clear; but when he came to sum up, he performed the task in a masterly manner. While in the midst of his argument, he was interrupted by the opposite counsel, who charged him with misquoting evidence. Mr. Van Buren halted, and, addressing the court, said: "Will your honor please refer to his minutes to settle this matter?" The judge did as requested, found Mr. Van Buren was right, when he proceeded with his argument.

Calling upon Mr. Van Buren one evening at his hotel, I found him dictating to a reporter a speech he had delivered, perhaps the previous afternoon. I proposed to withdraw so as not to interfere with the work he had in hand. Mr. Van Buren begged me to be seated, stating

that he could talk with me and go on with the task he had undertaken without any sort of difficulty. Of course I got away as soon as I well could, but he was apparently right in saying that he could carry on conversation with friends and keep an amanuensis fully employed at the same time.

He was a great wag. A lady tract distributor came into his office one day and asked if she might leave some of her tracts with him. "Certainly, madame," said Mr. Van Buren, "but please let the toes be pointed toward the door."

While in Washington one day during the democratic troubles in this state, he was asked by one of the southern politicians what was the matter with his friends at home. "What do they want?" was the inquiry. "Have they not some man that they would like to make president?"

"Oh, no!" returned John. "It is quite true that we have in New York some man in almost every county who is eminently qualified for the office of president; but the fact is, the office *is so run down nobody there wants it!*"

But "the prince" ran altogether to humor. He preferred to go to Saratoga and have a jolly time with "his set" to having any office in the gift of the people. His only ambition was to have a frolic with his cronies. He was utterly reckless of his reputation or that of the family to which he belonged. There was nothing really bad about him; that is, he had no idea of engaging in anything which was wrong and reprehensible; but he was so heedless and indifferent to public opinion that he ranked low in the moral scale. Though not at all vicious, he was guilty of about all the vices. He delighted in being a rowdy. It was in 1849 that the two factions met at Rome to arrange their differences and make up. Leading democrats, representing both sides,

were there in force. Among others present was a physician from one of the western counties, who was a great admirer of "Prince John," and a strong advocate of temperance. He met me in the street, soon after his arrival, and after shaking hands, desired to learn if John Van Buren was in town, and to be seen. I told him I knew where he stopped, and if he wished to be shown to his room I would go with him and introduce him. Of course he wanted to see Mr. Van Buren, the man of whom he had heard so much. I consented to act as his pilot. John was stopping at the old American, and had a corner room in the third story, fronting on two of the principal streets. Here John had caused to be fitted up a bar, supplying it with numerous decanters, etc., and he was treating his friends as they called upon him. The day was hot, and he had removed his coat, and vest, and was officiating as bar-tender. I introduced my friend, who was asked "what he would take?" receiving for reply, "not anything." He remained in the room probably two minutes, when he quietly withdrew, remarking to me, as we descended the stairway, "Well, if *that* is John Van Buren, I have seen enough of him!" A more disgusted looking man I never saw. He was entirely unprepared for an exhibition of that kind, and evidently regarded John and the role in which he appeared with unspeakable loathing.

John went back to the democratic fold, while the great body of those who acted with him in the fight against the rule of the old liners went to the republican organization.

I understand, of course, that he was very unlike the men with whom I have classed him, except in the matter of intellect. Mr. Greeley was distinguished for the purity of his private life, and I have never heard Mr. Conkling's called in question. Mr. Van Buren was as bad morally as he was brilliant intellectually, and strik-

ingly illustrates the truth of some one's observation, that "with the talents of an angel a man may be a fool."

I think he was an abler man than his father, but he inherited few, if any, of his estimable qualities. He would have filled with transcendent ability any position he might have been placed in had he desired it and been as circumspect as he was imprudent and foolhardy.



## CHAPTER XXI.

Jefferson and Adjoining Counties Strongly Free Soil—The Rome Convention Fails to Agree—Convention at Syracuse—Coalition Tickets Made in State and County, and Elected—Discovery of Gold in California—The Great Fire in Watertown.

The free soil sentiment was very emphatic in this and adjoining counties in 1848, as will be seen by these figures on the presidential ticket :

	<i>Taylor.</i>	<i>Van Buren.</i>	<i>Cass.</i>
Jefferson .....	4,841	4,341	2,445
St. Lawrence .....	3,667	6,023	613
Oswego .....	3,655	4,254	1,134
Lewis .....	1,223	1,258	789

Van Buren over Taylor in these four counties, 2,490 ; over Cass, 10,895. In the state Van Buren's vote exceeded that of General Cass by 6,122. So the old line democrats were out-voted, not only by the whigs, but by their free soil brethren, whom they had up to this time affected to despise.

In the succeeding year, (1849,) therefore, it was proposed that representatives of the two divisions of the party should assemble at Rome to see if a treaty of peace could not be arranged. Accordingly two conventions met in that village on the 15th of August, and the strongest men in the two organizations were there. The hunkers of Jefferson county were represented by Lysander H. Brown, Eli West and E. B. Wynn ; the free soilers by Alfred Fox, A. W. Danforth and Willard Ives.

Ex-Governor Marcy presided over the hunker convention, which met in the Presbyterian church, and Joseph H. Anderson of Westchester officiated as chair-

man of the free soilers, who assembled in the Baptist church. The conventions were in session two days, but were unable to agree on a platform, the free soilers insisting that the sentiment of the Wilmot proviso should be endorsed by the united party in case union was effected, and the hunkers refusing. So the delegates separated without accomplishing anything.

The hunkers then called a state convention at Syracuse, the 5th of September, to nominate a judge of the court of appeals and a state ticket. It nominated for judge, Hiram Denio; for comptroller, John A. Lott; secretary of state, Jesse C. Dann; attorney general, Levi S. Chatfield; treasurer, Darius A. Ogden; state engineer, John D. Fay; state prison inspector, Darius Clark, and for canal commissioner, Frederick Follet. While doing this, it authorized its state committee to withdraw the names of Denio, Dann, Ogden and Fay, on condition that the free soilers, who were to hold a convention at Utica the 12th of September, should name for these positions "well known and acknowledged democrats," and endorse the nominations of Lott, Chatfield, Clark and Follett. The free soilers agreed to this, and named Freeborn G. Jewett for judge, Henry S. Randall for secretary of state, Benjamin Welch, jr., for treasurer, and Alexander Campbell for state engineer. So a peace was patched up and the ticket thus nominated was elected. In Jefferson county a union ticket was agreed upon. Judge Lansing, who had been nominated for senator, was dropped, and Alanson Skinner substituted. Frederick W. Hubbard was nominated for supreme court judge. For member of assembly, the nominees were John Winslow, Joel Haworth and Alfred Fox; for sheriff, Rufus Herrick; for county clerk, Isaac Munson; superintendent of poor, Martin J. Hutchins; and for special judge, Thomas P. Saunders. All these candidates were chosen.

These doings were the result of outside pressure. There were large numbers of men calling themselves democrats who were restive under the rule of the whigs. Old line democrats had been accustomed all their lives to seeing their friends in power and enjoying the offices, and therefore did not relish the idea of being in the minority, while the free soilers, understanding that the whigs had as little sympathy with them and the great principle for which they contended as the hunker democrats, were indisposed to serve them. In fact, agreeing with the democrats upon all questions except the one relating to the extension of slavery, they naturally preferred aiding them to helping those to whom they were wholly opposed.

The reunion was a short-lived affair. It lasted long enough, however, to give the state to Pierce for president in 1852.

Politics were rather quiet during the year 1849. General Taylor became president the 4th of March, and the whigs were busy looking after the spoils. There was a short and not altogether friendly struggle for the post-office in Watertown; the selection was made by a caucus of whig voters, which designated Philo S. Johnson, a carpenter and joiner, who was appointed, and held the office several years.

About the first of January, 1849, stories of the discovery of immense quantities of gold in California began to reach us from that far-off region. Up to that time little was known of that distant land. I had read Dana's "Two Years Before the Mast," and learned how sailors were picked up and treated on board our merchant vessels, but did not learn a great deal about California, though the vessel upon which he sailed touched there, and if I remember correctly he made one or more short excursions into the interior of the country in pursuit of hides. I was thoroughly interested in his descriptions,

and had he bestowed any special attention on California I think I should remember the fact. If I am not mistaken the vessel he was aboard of was loaded with hides, procured mainly in California, after which it returned to Boston by way of Cape Horn. I purchased the book when it was issued, and gave it away, of course ; otherwise I should now have it to look at in the light of what is known of the Golden State.

I did not take much stock in the extraordinary reports with regard to the finding of gold in California, and discouraged emigration thither. A good many went nevertheless ; and when settlers there began to count up the result of their labors, it was plain that there was gold, and in paying quantities, for ten millions of dollars were taken out in 1848, forty millions in 1849, fifty in 1850, fifty-five in 1851, sixty in 1852, sixty-five in 1853, when there began to be a falling off in the yield, which was followed by a corresponding increase in the amount of silver mined. Had there been from fifty to sixty millions dug each year since then, and no more silver taken, there would have been no such difference between gold and silver as there is today. In fact, there was a time when gold was depreciating in price and silver advancing. The reason why a silver dollar is not at this moment worth its face in gold is because silver has been found in greater abundance than gold. Let the silver mines give out and gold be found in greater quantities, and the cry against the former would quickly subside.

The great fire in Watertown happened in the year 1849, on the 13th day of May. One hundred buildings were burned, valued at \$125,000, besides personal property to about the same amount. The burned district embraced the American hotel and all of its out-buildings ; all Pad-dock's stores on Washington street ; all Fairbanks' block and stores beyond ; all the block of stores opposite on Court street ; Woodruff's iron block ; the Episcopal

church ; the Columbia hotel ; the Northern State Journal, Democratic Union, and Joel Greene's printing office ; about thirty stores (in all ;) the postoffice and all its contents ; Black River, Wooster Sherman's and Henry Keep's banks and the surrogate's office. Every dry goods store in the village, with the exception of four, (those of Messrs. Hungerford, Ely, Keelar & Fuller, and Vaughn,) was burned.

## CHAPTER XXII.

The Tide Californiaward—The Overland Route—Business in California—  
The Slave Catching Law—Quarrel in the Whig Party in This State in  
1850—Parts of Both State Tickets Elected.

As already stated, there was very great excitement throughout all the north and west in 1849 over the stories of the finding of immense quantities of gold in California, and many young men went there from this section of the state. Among others drawn thither by the alluring prospect was our friend John Sheldon, who in the winter of 1849-50 was engaged in teaching the district school at Tylerville. He had a brother, Bishop, residing in Independence, Missouri, some 300 miles above St. Louis. This brother proposed that John should meet him at Independence and accompany him to California, overland. Regarding the proposition with favor, on the expiration of the term for which he had engaged to teach, Mr. Sheldon packed his effects, and on the 10th of April, 1850, set his face toward the setting sun. He went by stage to Syracuse. Arriving there too late for the evening train, he was compelled to remain over night in the Salt City. There were then but two passenger trains a day on the Central road from Syracuse, one leaving in the morning and the other in the evening. Mr. Sheldon took the morning train, and arrived in Buffalo in time for the evening boat for Detroit. There was no railroad at that date between these points. From Detroit a railway had been constructed to New Buffalo, on Lake Michigan. Mr. Sheldon passed over this road and from New Buffalo to Chicago by boat. Chicago was at that time beginning to put on airs ; though most of the build-



ings stood upon piles and water was in all the streets and gutters, yet it was a town of great expectations, and regarded as a live place even at that early date. From Chicago Mr. Sheldon went to La Salle by canal, and thence to St. Louis by boat on the Illinois river. Here he remained a day or two, and then went up the river to Independence, which is situated three or four miles below the present flourishing town of Kansas City. I can well remember when Independence was an important point. It is now only remembered for what it was. It may some day be swallowed up by Kansas City if it has not already been.

Here the brothers Sheldon fitted out an expedition for crossing the plains, consisting of a wagon and six mules. They left about the 10th of May, taking the trail which passed Fort Kearney and Fort Laramie, and ran thence to the South Pass. From there they followed down the Humboldt river 300 miles, and at length struck the Carson river, which they followed until they reached the Sierras Nevada, which they descended, and finally came to Placerville about the 10th of September. They were therefore four months on the route, and a tedious journey it must have been. The same distance is now made in three or four days. The Sheldons went to Caloma, where gold was first discovered in January, 1848, and immediately began work. The first gold was taken from a point about 50 miles N. E. of Sacramento. They realized about \$10 a day each at the outset, but did not always obtain as much. They, however, took whatever they could get, and were satisfied with their gains. John returned to "the states" at the end of two or three years, bringing with him the fruits of his efforts; while his brother Bishop remained in California, made his mark there, but died a good many years since, and was buried in the same cemetery containing the remains of the brave Broderick. Mark Sheldon went out at a later period, engaged in trade and amassed a large fortune.

Bayard Taylor went out to California for the Tribune in 1849, and in the latter part of the summer sent to that paper such items as these :

“A year ago there might have been 500 inhabitants in San Francisco; there are at a low calculation at present 20,000. The Senator is the only steamer practicable for navigating the Sacramento. Her profits are \$100,000 monthly. The stage fare from San Francisco to San Jose is half a dollar a mile. The owner of a ranch on the Sacramento has received \$25,000 during the past season for vegetables alone. Sacramento city contains 10,000 inhabitants. In April last (1849) there were four houses in the place. Lots 20 by 75 feet bring from \$3,000 to \$5,000. The City hotel, formerly Captain Sutter's saw-mill, pays \$30,000 per annum. A new hotel has been rented for \$35,000. Many of the merchants take from one to three thousand dollars per day. The Placer Times, published at Sacramento city, receives from \$1,000 to \$2,000 per week for job work and advertising. The compositors get \$15 per day.”

The arrivals of passengers at San Francisco from the 12th of April, 1849, to January 28th, 1850, were 59,888. Of these 9,122 were foreigners, the rest Americans.

There was a similar rush across the plains. A Fort Laramie letter, dated July 1, 1850, stated that up to that date the number of names registered at that place, was 38,312; the number of wagons 8,773. Making allowance for those who failed to register, the number was set down at 40,000.

In the way of politics, things were in an unsettled condition. There was trouble in both parties. The two wings of the democratic party, having so far buried their differences as to support and elect their nominees for state and county officers in the fall of 1849, were nominally acting together; yet in the matter of principle they were as wide apart as they had been at any time. The free soilers still insisted that they stood and would continue to stand upon the platform of opposition to slavery extension. In this year the law requiring the freemen of the north to assist in the recapture of fugitives from slavery, commonly known as the “slave-catching law,” was passed. The northern congressmen gener-

ally voted against it, so far as they voted at all; but enough sustained it to help it through, and it received the signature of Millard Fillmore, who became president on the death of General Taylor, (July 9, 1850.) This created immense dissatisfaction in the whig party, in which there were many people who had no love for slavery, and did not propose to become slave catchers. The whig state convention, held at Syracuse the 26th September, had a serious quarrel, and came near having a split. There was a bitter contest between the friends of Mr. Fillmore and those of Mr. Seward, lasting the best part of two days. A committee on resolutions was appointed, which reported a series which were satisfactory to Mr. Fillmore's friends, but not to Mr. Seward's. The latter moved to lay them on the table until after the ticket was formed. This motion was opposed by the Fillmoreites, one of whom declared that "if this course was adopted, it would divide the whig party of New York." Nevertheless the motion prevailed, and Washington Hunt was nominated for governor. After the ticket was completed, the resolutions were so amended that a special vote of thanks was tendered to Mr. Seward, when the convention broke up. Subsequently, the chairman of the convention, Francis Granger, and other supporters of Fillmore, got together in the supreme court room, Empire block, organized a meeting and appointed a committee to draft an address to the whigs of the state, and, if deemed proper, to call a convention to nominate a state ticket.

I believe the address was issued, but no new ticket was put in nomination. The Fillmore men were very well satisfied with Washington Hunt, who ran somewhat ahead of his ticket, and was chosen by 262 majority over Horatio Seymour, who headed the democratic ticket. The late Judge Church was elected lieutenant governor by upwards of 7,000 majority; John C. Mather was

chosen canal commissioner, W. P. Angell state prison inspector, and Charles S. Benton clerk of the court of appeals—all democrats.

The whigs carried the assembly, and made Henry J. Raymond speaker. Hon. William A. Wheeler was chosen from Franklin for a second term, having been elected for the first time in 1849. In 1850 Jefferson county sent to the assembly William A. Gilbert, John Pool, jr., and Loren Bushnell; St. Lawrence elected Smith Stillwell, John Horton and Noble S. Elderkin; Oswego, Moses P. Hatch and Benjamin F. Lewis; Lewis, Caleb Lyon. Lyon resigned April 26th, 1851, when Dean S. Howard was chosen. Hatch of Oswego also resigned, and William P. Curtiss was chosen in his place.

To congress, Willard Ives was chosen from the Jefferson district, Leander Babcock from the Oswego district, and Preston King from St. Lawrence—all free soil democrats.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

The Terms Hunker and Barnburner Defined—Letter from H. Greeley—His Tariff Ideas—R. W. & O. R. R. Completed September 13th, 1851—Deaths of Doctor A. S. Greene and Orville Hungerford—Resignation of State Senators.

I have been asked for a definition of the terms “hunkers” and “barnburners,” especially the last named word. I find this explanation of the latter in Johnson’s Encyclopedia :

BARNBURNER—A nickname given to that portion of the democratic party of the state of New York which opposed the extension of slavery and supported Van Buren and Adams in 1848. They were esteemed too radical by their adversaries, one of whom illustrated his meaning by a story of a farmer who was so greatly annoyed by rats, which devoured his grain, that he burned his barn to get rid of them. The barnburners, led by Colonel Samuel Young, Hon. Silas Wright, Michael Hoffman, etc., opposed further borrowing of money for the improvement or extension of canals, and were hostile generally to public debts, corporate privileges, etc.

Webster’s dictionary gives this definition of “hunker :”

“One opposed to progress in politics ; hence, one opposed to progress in general ; a conservative ; a fogey.”

Never an apologist for human servitude ; always in favor of letting every individual control himself, and, as far as practicable, his own earnings, to the end that he might work out his own destiny, it is not singular that I became a barnburner. Nor have I ever been partial to debts, private or public. Of course, I understand that it is at times necessary for individuals to go into debt, as it is for states and nations ; but it is my judgment that debts are to be avoided as far as possible ; that when contracted they should be paid as soon as the means can

be obtained. It is a bad thing for a man beginning in life to be hampered with debt. The chances are that he will be always poor, always a slave. Only one greater calamity can befall him, to wit: to come into possession of a considerable fortune which he has not earned. Such an inheritance is almost certain to be wasted, and is not unfrequently the ruin of its possessor.

The objection to public debts is that they are a burden on the industry of the people, and so are to be shunned. A big national debt is a big curse—a big curse on the producers of the country, the men who till the soil, work the mines, operate the manufactories and fill the workshops, for they are the ones who pay the interest and will have to discharge the principal if the obligation is ever cancelled.

After the election of 1847 I addressed to Horace Greeley a letter in which I expressed the hope that the whig party in the then approaching presidential contest would nominate some one for the presidency whom radical democrats could vote for, suggesting the name of William H. Seward. I told him there were conservatives and radicals in both parties, and that it appeared to me the latter should act in harmony and be true to their political convictions, no matter what became of the old parties. In reply I received this letter from Mr. Greeley, which is not devoid of interest even at this late period :

NEW YORK, Nov. 13, 1847.

B. BROCKWAY, Esq.:

Old Friend : What you suggest is entirely right, and must come to pass, but I think the difficulties in the way of its *immediate* accomplishment are too formidable to be overcome. These are, first the war; second, the devotion of the whig masses to Mr. Clay, and the traditional hostility to him on the other side; third, immediate questions of local policy in the state. The tariff need no longer be in the way, for every year of thrift is placing our own manufactures farther and farther beyond the reach of destruction, and I am confident that ten years hence the lowest duty that the government can live on will be high enough for the great mass of our iron, woolen and cotton



fabrics. There are a few things which really need—that is, the country needs for them—additional encouragement now simply because they were neglected in former times, mainly silk and linen, but I think these can be arranged for without difficulty; if not, they can be done without. But we have got to fight a little longer about a general corporation law. Your folks will naturally cling to the individual liability principle, which I think as mistaken, unjust and impolitic as to authorize the suing of any citizen for the entire damage accruing from bad roads or broken bridges in his town. It will take us a year or two longer to get through with this and have it all settled, as it now is in the eastern states. The sub-treasury, as practically applied, is not worth talking about.

We couldn't get Seward nominated by our party. We may nominate him as vice-president, for the sake of the strong hold he has on the adopted citizens, and then he will be swallowed with curses by thousands. He has made bitter enemies alike by his faults and his virtues. The only man we could put up who would not be obnoxious to your folks is John McLean, who would make an excellent president, and be entirely uninfluenced by party in his public career; but he is cold-hearted, cautious, conservative—in short, we don't like him. I think we shall try for Clay, and in case he is not nominated, (which is still very probable,) fall back on Corwin. He is the best democrat among us, but his position in the war will render it impossible for you to take him.

But no man can guess where any of us will be next July. For the present you have to make a desperate, concerted struggle for the control of your own party; we have to do the same with ours. Your friends here are confident of succeeding in this. If you can send twenty delegates from New York in favor of nominating Van Buren or some more decided anti-southern man, and have a fair lift from each of the other free states, you will then be in position to take advantage of circumstances. We are very likely to have at least two whig tickets; I don't think you are unlikely to be in the same predicament. It looks to me as if this (of 1848) were to be a kind of pell-mell scuffle, after which we can see how and where to find our places.

The basis of union of the true democracy of the next twenty years is to be *land reform*, not alone as applied to public lands, but to *all* lands. With this goes *labor reform*, or the ten-hour regulation. To these articles I hope that another will attach itself, viz: *abolition of the army and navy*. On such a platform, peace being secured and all our boundaries clearly defined, I think the best party ever yet seen in our country can be rallied, and in abundant season for the presidential election of 1852. \* \* \* \*

Yours,

HORACE GREELEY.

In the light of subsequent events portions of this letter will appear quite ridiculous. The author little dreamed that the country was on the eve of civil war,

and that the government would need not only its little army and navy, but that both would have to be greatly augmented. It is evident that Mr. Greeley was not much of a prophet. His ideas concerning land reform and labor reform were Utopian.

The whigs nominated General Taylor for president, the democrats General Cass, and the free soilers, composed of democrats and abolitionists, Martin Van Buren. So the democrats were divided and General Taylor slipped into the presidential office in consequence.

But the most interesting thing in Mr. Greeley's letter is the opinion confidently expressed that ten years hence, that is, in 1857, "the lowest duty that the government can live on will be high enough for the great mass of our iron, woolen and cotton fabrics." This, coming from one of the staunchest advocates of a high protective tariff the country has ever had, will seem strange in view of our present tariff, which is higher than any that Mr. Greeley ever dreamed of. But I do not care to multiply words on this subject. Readers will make their own comments.

In the year 1851 the Rome, Watertown & Ogdensburg railroad was completed to Watertown, and trains commenced running the 13th of September. A short time afterwards, in the same year, the road was opened to Chaumont.

In this year Watertown lost by death two of her distinguished men, viz: Doctor Alpheus S. Greene and Hon. Orville Hungerford. The former held the office of postmaster from 1829 to 1840, a period of eleven years. He held the office of county judge for a term, represented the county two years in the assembly, and was a member of the constitutional convention of 1846. He died on the 25th of January, at the age of 64.

Mr. Hungerford died on the 6th of April, in the 61st year of his age. He represented the Jefferson district in

congress two terms, and was a candidate for comptroller in 1847. He had rare financial talents, and was a first-class business man. He was a leading man in the Jefferson County bank, its president, if I am not mistaken, and rendered great service in the building of the Rome & Watertown railroad, and was its president when he died. Both these men were leading democrats.

On the 17th of April twelve democratic state senators resigned their seats, so as to leave the senate without a three-fifths quorum, to prevent the passage of a bill they contended was unconstitutional. Only half of them were re-elected. Alanson Skinner, who represented this district, was one of the resigning senators, and was not returned. Caleb Lyon was elected to fill the vacancy. I think they made a mistake in resigning. They should have employed all proper means to defeat the bill, placed themselves on record against it, and if it went through in spite of their efforts, taken measures to bring the law before the proper tribunal to settle the question in dispute. The bill ultimately became a law, went to the court of appeals, and was adjudged to be unconstitutional, null and void.

Jefferson county elected to the assembly in 1851, William A. Gilbert of Adams, Merrill Coburn of Felts Mills, and William Rouse of Stone Mills; St. Lawrence county elected Smith Stilwell, Benjamin Smith and Parker Rose; Oswego, Edwin C. Hart and James T. Gibson; Lewis, John Benedict.

To the senate, Ashley Davenport of Copenhagen was chosen from this district, Henry B. Smith from that of St. Lawrence, and James Platt from Oswego.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

The Late George Bloss—Nomination and Election of General Pierce—  
Description of Campaign and Review of the Same.

While recently looking through a file of the Oswego Palladium for the years 1851-2, I noticed the following advertisement, printed among the business notices :

G. M. D. BLOSS,

ATTORNEY AND COUNSELOR AT LAW,

Office in the Woodruff Block, over A. G. Talcott's jewelry store, opposite  
the Welland house, First street, West Oswego.

In his way Mr. Bloss was almost as much of a character as Horace Greeley. He studied law with Grant & Allen, (the late Judge William F. Allen,) and opened an office as above. It may be a question whether he ever had a client. He took a far deeper interest in politics than in the law, and never stopped in his office if he could find any one in the Welland house or elsewhere with whom he could have a political confab. He had a prodigious memory, and if he happened to hear any person make an assertion that did not tally with his recollection, he did not hesitate to march straight up to him, whether an acquaintance or an utter stranger, and charge him with uttering a falsehood. Why he was not knocked down every day of his life was something of a marvel, but everybody in Oswego knew George Bloss as an "impudent puppy," (that's what people called him,) and so paid no attention to him ; while his youthful appearance and apparent unimportance probably shielded him from assault.

Shortly after this period Bloss drifted to Cincinnati, and somehow found a place on the editorial staff of the Cincinnati Enquirer, and very soon became the political ed-

itor, and achieved high reputation among the democrats of Ohio. He was, in fact, one of the democratic leaders in the state, and wielded perhaps as much influence as any other man. He was pretty generally a delegate to the state gatherings, placed on important committees, and occupied a distinguished position among the great men of the party. He was twenty years or more the leading political writer on the *Enquirer*, the intimate and confidential friend of Governor Allen, of Allen G. Thurman, Senator Pendleton, (writing the life of the last named,) and other magnates of the party. He ran for congress in 1874, (I believe,) but the district was republican, and he was defeated. I met Bloss in Cincinnati in October, 1875. He was as full of politics and democracy as ever. He was certain Allen was to be re-elected governor, and carefully stated the reasons upon which his opinion was based. (Allen was defeated by 5,544.) Mr. Bloss married an Ohio lady, and had a pleasant home eighteen miles from the city. His place being connected with the Ohio metropolis by rail, he rode into town every morning and returned in the afternoon. It was to this railroad that he owed his death. Walking upon the track one day, and probably so engrossed in great questions of governmental policy as to be deaf to the shrill whistle of the locomotive, he was overtaken within sight of his own dwelling by that potent engine for good and ill, tossed from the track as if he had been a feather, and of course instantly killed. His mangled remains were gathered up and conveyed to his residence as preparations were being made by the family for dinner. The distress of that household cannot be described.

Thus ended the career of our quondam friend, George Bloss. Though he had an inordinate passion for politics, he was not without estimable qualities of head and heart. He wrote a volume of essays, which are replete



with choice sentiments, and which might be read with profit by every young man.

He wrote the worst manuscript I ever undertook to decipher. Tramping printers who applied to the Enquirer for a "sit" were handed an article from Bloss' pen as the shortest way of disposing of them. Giving it a brief examination, they would drop it like a hot potato. A sheet of his manuscript, taken at random from the waste basket of the Enquirer, which had been set up in that office, was presented to me several years ago. I have often exhibited it to curious people, but have never met one that could read the first word of it, and I have been equally unfortunate myself. I might add that Bloss was a native of Jefferson county, if I am not mistaken, and removed with his parents to Oswego when a young child.

The year 1852 was a presidential year. The democrats, after a wearisome struggle of four days, nominated Franklin Pierce of New Hampshire for president. Among those voted for in the convention were General Cass, James Buchanan, Governor Marcy, Stephen A. Douglas, Sam Houston and General Lane. General Cass received the largest number of votes. General Pierce did not receive a single vote until the convention had balloted about forty times, when the Kentucky delegation voted for him. Tennessee followed suit. On the forty-ninth ballot Pierce was nominated, receiving the entire vote of the convention. His appears to have been about the only name the convention could agree upon. Like Polk, who was named by the democrats in 1844, he was little known, and so nothing could be said against him. He was an "unknown quantity." Neither of the democratic factions in this state was pleased with the nomination, but both supported it with more or less zeal. At this time the barnburners did not see any good reason for electing a whig to the presidency upon a pro-slavery



platform. Unless something was to be gained to freedom by defeating the democratic nominee, they did not understand why he should not be supported by them. They preferred him to General Scott, the whig nominee, who was not considered a fit person for president. He was a vain man, and by his opponents styled "old fuss and feathers." Daniel Webster declared the nomination of Scott one "not fit to be made." The same thing could have been said of Pierce, and with as much reason. He was a poor stick. But he was a dyed-in-the-wool democrat, a citizen of the granite state, a lawyer of fair reputation, and so the democrats generally voted for him, and he was chosen. Governor Marcy was given the position of secretary of state, who looked after the appointments in this state, and, so far as I remember, they were fairly distributed. In its general policy, however, the administration of Pierce leaned toward the south. As a matter of fact, he could not have been nominated had he occupied a position at all equivocal on the slavery question.

The whigs had the same trouble in their convention the democrats did in theirs. The candidates were Millard Fillmore, General Scott and Daniel Webster. Mr. Fillmore had the highest vote on the first ballot; subsequently Scott was ahead. The nomination was made on the fifty-third ballot, when Scott received 158, Fillmore 112 and Webster 21. On the previous ballots Webster had received 27 votes.

Both the friends of Fillmore and Webster were greatly disgusted with the choice of the convention. Both had made extraordinary efforts to secure the nomination. Mr. Fillmore had signed the fugitive slave law, under which slaves escaping from the slave states to the free were being taken back to their owners, and Mr. Webster declared the statute a just one, insisting that the north ought to "conquer its prejudices" and assist in the exe-

cution of its provisions. Both, however, got "left," and saw General Scott bear off the prize they had so diligently sought. They were sorely disappointed, and their special friends, I think, did not care how the election resulted. At all events, Pierce was elected almost unanimously. Scott carried but four states and received only 42 of the 298 electoral votes.

Mr. Webster died the same year, and Theodore Parker, who preached a discourse on the occasion of his death, expressed the belief that his disappointment was so great on account of his defeat in the convention that he did not care to live. Mr. Parker says :

"He longed for the presidency; but Harrison kept him from the nomination in '40, Clay in '44, Taylor in '48, and Scott in '52. He never had a wide and original influence in the politics of the nation, for he had no elemental thunder of his own—the tariff was Mr. Calhoun's at first; the force bill was from another hand; the fugitive slave bill was Mr. Mason's; the 'omnibus' had many fathers, whereof Webster was not one. He was not a blood relation to any of the great measures—to free trade or protection, to paper money or hard coin, to freedom or slavery; he was of their kindred only by adoption. He has been on all sides of most questions, save on the winning side."

And speaking of Parker impels me to say that he was one of the most talented divines this country has ever produced. Of course I understand he was not orthodox; he was both feared and hated by that kind of people—hated because he was feared—but few men have lived who were more loyal to truth, right, justice and true Christianity than Theodore Parker. He was at least half a century in advance of his age. He was a deep thinker, and he dared to express his thoughts, as did Martin Luther, who proclaimed to the world his convictions with such force and earnestness as to change the drift of religious sentiment throughout the civilized world. Parker was an indefatigable worker; he had an immense library, and was as familiar with its treasures as the real mechanic is with the tools in his workshop; he spoke and wrote with equal facility, and always with tre-

mendous power. As an analytical writer he has seldom been equaled.

How would the reader relish a portrait of the man as he appeared in the pulpit and in private life? I think I will have to give it.

## CHAPTER XXV.

Theodore Parker as a Preacher—A Sermon by him—A Temple of Free Seats and Free Speech—His Estimate of Daniel Webster—A Mixed Eulogy.

I was in Boston one Sunday in the summer of 1852, and having a curiosity to see and hear Theodore Parker, of whom terrible things had been said, both in the pulpit and the press—for he was unsparing in his denunciations of pro-slavery newspapers and pro-slavery preachers—I asked the clerk at the hotel at which I was stopping for information which would enable me to find the place at which Mr. Parker held forth. He gave the necessary directions, and about ten o'clock in the forenoon I set out for the church edifice. I found it without difficulty. I was early. Few persons had arrived, and there was no sexton or usher to show me in. I waited in the vestibule a few minutes, and then ventured in. Proceeding up one of the three aisles, I discovered a man sitting alone. Passing into the slip, I hesitatingly inquired if I would be an intruder if I took a seat with him? "*No, sir,*" he answered, and he spoke very emphatically, "*the seats are all free here.*"

So I seated myself and awaited coming events. The congregation came in leisurely, but in the course of half an hour or more the auditorium was comfortably filled, and finally the preacher made his appearance, went straight into the desk, and immediately began work. He read half a dozen verses from the Bible, delivered a short invocation, and very soon commenced his sermon, a written one. I am not certain whether there was singing or not. If so, the fact did not leave an impression

on my mind. I only remember that the preliminary part of the service was very brief.

By this time I was perfectly satisfied that I was in Parker's church and that Parker was the officiating clergyman. He was rather short in stature ; that is, he was not tall, but was well formed ; stood erect, without strutting ; had a good-sized head, and one of the most benignant faces that any human being ever wore. In private conversation he was a brilliant talker, but spoke in low tones. He charmed you by his simple speech and quiet manner. He put on no airs, but won your heart by his sympathetic and kindly ways. There was no fire in his composition, nothing electric about him ; but things that he disliked, that appeared to him to be wrong, he painted in such abhorrent colors that you turned from them as from a leper. It shocked you to look at his pictures ; to listen to his representations.

I think the discourse he delivered was without text. He told his auditors in commencing that they would remember he had spoken the previous Sunday on the sins of youth. "I propose today," said Mr. Parker, "to speak of the sins of the middle-aged, to take daguerreotype views by the sunlight of truth," and he proceeded accordingly. Of course I can give the reader no idea of that sermon or address, which lasted something over two hours, as I remember. Suffice to say, it was the most terrible exhibition and portrayal of the shortcomings of people in our age that ever I listened to. If there was any fault in the talk, there was too much of it to be practical. The feast was more than any audience could digest. Still it was listened to with the stillness of death, and had it been two hours longer I suppose all present would have remained to the end. Though the weather was intensely hot, no one was apparently at all impatient to leave, and I am sure I could have tarried there an hour or two longer had he kept on. Mr. Par-

ker made few gestures ; he hardly stirred in his tracks ; but he read or spoke just slowly enough to enable the hearer to understand the import of every word and to fully comprehend every sentence. He was an excellent reader, if I know what good reading is, his articulation being perfect, with sufficient emphasis to give each word and sentence its full meaning.

“The great question now-a-days,” said Mr. Parker, “is, *Will it pay?* WILL IT PAY? is the question which is asked by the man who puts up the factory and the one who puts up the prayer.” And so he went on for two mortal hours, striking right and left, exposing hypocrisy and one sham after another until the hearer was appalled by the frailty of the human family and the small amount of true Christianity and real virtue among men. One of the sins of the middle-aged was that of “marrying for money,” making merchandise of the purest and holiest sentiments of the human heart, or such as should be pure and holy, and it was characterized in fitting terms, and if any one who listened to his words had been inclined to better his or her fortune by wedding some wealthy young man or woman, the misguided soul deserved to be pitied. A more wicked and execrable proceeding was never exhibited to general condemnation.

As showing something of the style of Mr. Parker’s speaking, I give a few sentences from his discourse on the death of Mr. Webster, of which I have already spoken.

While conceding that Mr. Webster was a great man, that he possessed a great brain—greater, perhaps, than any other public man the country ever produced—he considered that he had great faults, and he did not hesitate to speak of them. Mr. Parker did not subscribe to the sentiment that “the truth is not to be spoken at all times.” On the contrary, he thought the truth should always be spoken, let it hit who or where it might. Be-



cause Mr. Webster was dead was no reason for overlooking or covering up his shortcomings. That was Parker's idea. So he referred to his faults and exhibited his weak points as they appeared to him. Boston was indignant as a matter of course ; it was angry, and denounced the offender in unmeasured terms. But this was what Parker expected. He knew that Boston—at least that portion of the people engaged in commercial pursuits—worshipped Webster, thought there was no man like him, and that his friends would most likely be offended if their idol was spoken of in words other than those of unstinted praise. But Mr. Parker preferred to speak of his acts, of what he had done and failed to do, and let them bestow the praise or condemnation as truth and justice should demand.

Mr. Webster had been esteemed a great constitutional lawyer, but Mr. Parker intimated that he never ventured an opinion until he had held long consultations with Chief Justice Story. He was not a great scholar, nor a profound logician, but he had great understanding, and an extraordinary capacity for stating a common sense proposition in plain and intelligible terms. He wrote a handsome declamation ; he made a strong speech, a speech clothed in strong language, a speech that carried conviction to the common mind ; yet it was often more specious than sound, more plausible than true. Says Parker :

“As a statesman, his lack of what I call the higher reason and imagination continually appears. He invented nothing. To the national stock he added no new idea, created out of new thought ; no new maxim, formed by induction out of human history and old thought. The great ideas of the time were not born in his bosom.

“He organized nothing. There were great ideas of immense practical value seeking lodgment in a body ; he

aided them not. None of the great measures of our time were his—not one of them. His best bill was the specie bill of 1815, which caused payments to be made in national currency.

“Lacking both moral principle and intellectual ideas, political ethics and political economy, it must needs be that his course in politics was crooked. He opposed the Mexican war, but invested a son in it, and praised the soldier who fought therein as surpassing our fathers who ‘stood behind bulwarks on Bunker Hill!’ He called on the nation to uphold the stars of America on the fields of Mexico, though he knew it was the stripes they held up. Now he is for free trade, then for protection; now for specie, then for bills; first for a bank, then it is an obsolete idea; now for freedom and against slavery, then for slavery and against freedom; now justice is the object of government, now money; now what makes men Christians makes them good citizens, next religion is good ‘everywhere but in politics—there it makes men mad;’ now religion is the only ground of government, and all conscience is to be respected, next there is no law higher than the ‘omnibus,’ and he hoots at conscience and would not re-enact the law of God.”

In this style Parker continued for not less than three hours; at least, the discourse fills 160 pages of the volume before me. Few men have been so severely handled as was Mr. Webster by Parker. Nearly everybody thought it unjust and undeserved when it was delivered. Some may so consider it still; yet it may be a question whether Mr. Webster did not have more credit while he lived than he was entitled to. He certainly never was the author of any great measure. He delivered some good orations, and replied in a masterly way to Hayne when South Carolina proposed to disregard the acts of congress and step out of the Union. And this is about the extent of his public services. As a practical legisla-

tor, Vice President Wilson, the Natick shoemaker, was away ahead of him. Webster was a talker ; Wilson could work as well as talk.

The concluding part of Parker's discourse contained this paragraph—one of the finest things in the English language :

“Yet Daniel Webster had many popular qualities. He loved out-door and manly sports—boating, fishing, fowling. He was fond of nature, loving New Hampshire's mountain scenery. He had started small and poor, but had risen great and high, and honorably had fought his way alone. He rose early in the morning. He loved gardening, the parent of human pleasures. He was a farmer, and took a countryman's delight in country things—in loads of hay, in trees, in turnips, and the noble Indian corn, in monstrous swine. He had a patriarch's love of sheep—choice breeds thereof he had. He took great delight in cows—shorthorned Durhams, Ayrshires, Alderneys. He tilled paternal acres with his own oxen. He loved to give the kine fodder. It was pleasant to hear his talk of oxen. And but three days before he left the earth, too ill to visit them, his cattle, lowing, came to see their sick lord ; and, as he stood in his door, his great oxen were driven up, that he might smell their healthy breath, and look his last on those broad, generous faces, that were never false to him.”

## CHAPTER XXVI.

Necrology of 1852—Deaths of Many Prominent Men—The Know-Nothing Movement—Its Secret History—Its Success and Collapse.

I have already chronicled the result of the presidential election in 1852. Caleb Lyon was elected to congress from this district in that year. Bishop Perkins was chosen from the St. Lawrence district, and Gerrit Smith from the Oswego-Madison district. Beside these, several other gentlemen of note were chosen to congress from this state in the fall of '52; among them William M. Tweed, Mike Walsh, Francis B. Cutting, Russell Sage, Rufus W. Peckham, Charles Hughes, George A. Simmons, Francis E. Spinner, Edwin B. Morgan, Azariah Boody, T. T. Flagler, Solomon G. Haven and Reuben E. Fenton. All these names will be recognized as belonging to men who have been more or less prominent in the affairs of this state.

In the assembly, Jefferson county was represented by James Gifford of Adams, DeWitt C. West of Wilna, and Charles Smith of Cape Vincent; St. Lawrence by Barnabas Hall, Benjamin Smith and Parker W. Rose; Oswego by DeWitt C. Littlejohn and Charles A. Perkins; Lewis by Seymour Green.

Several men widely known died in 1852, among them, Thomas Moore, the sweet Irish poet, who expired the 26th of February, in the 72d year of his age; General Solomon Van Rensselaer, at Albany, April 23, aged 77; John Young, ex-governor of New York, April 30, in his 50th year; Henry Clay, the eminent Kentucky statesman, June 29, at the age of 72; the Duke of Wellington, September 14, at the age of 83, and Daniel Webster,

esteemed the foremost statesman of his time, October 24, aged 70.

The following year was rather a quiet one among the politicians. General Pierce became president on the 4th of March, and during the summer was engaged in parcelling out the offices among his supporters. The effort was to satisfy both factions of the party; the consequence was, he satisfied neither. The hunkers, or "hards," as they were then called, complained that the barnburners, or soft-shells, were given all the best places, while the latter insisted that the first-named obtained more than their due when they were allowed anything. The party was sadly demoralized and broken up. There were more independents than regulars. The delegates who were selected the latter part of the summer to meet in state convention to frame a ticket could not agree upon anything, and, after wrangling several days, made separate nominations. The hard-shell ticket was headed by George W. Clinton of Buffalo for secretary of state; the soft-shell ticket by Isaac A. Verplanck of the same city. The whigs nominated Elias W. Leavenworth of Syracuse for the office; and the independent democrats designated Charles B. Sedgwick for the place.

Of course the whig ticket was chosen, though the party was far from being united and harmonious. There were woolly-head whigs and silver grays, and great bitterness existed between the two factions. The whigs also carried the legislature. The senate stood 22 whigs, 7 hards and 3 softs. The late Judge Lansing was chosen from this district, and was classed as a hard. Zenas Clark was chosen in the St. Lawrence district, and called a soft, and Samuel C. Hitchcock, hard, was elected in the Oswego-Madison district. The assembly was composed of about 80 whigs, 28 to 30 hards, 26 to 28 softs, and 2 independents, or free democrats.



Jefferson county went against the democracy, electing D. C. Calvin district attorney over Lysander H. Brown by 120 majority.

To the assembly, Calvin Littlefield was chosen from the first district, Jesse E. Willes from the second, and William Dewey from the third. I think Alden Adams received the certificate of election in the second district, but his claim to the seat was contested by Mr. Willes, who succeeded February 3. St. Lawrence was represented in the assembly this year (1854) by Barnabas Hall, Silas Baldwin and Levi Miller; Oswego by D. C. Littlejohn and Azariah Wart; and Lewis by Jonathan C. Collins.

It was in the autumn of 1853 that the American, better known as the "know-nothing," party came into perceptible existence. It was a secret organization, and the idea was that foreigners, especially Catholics, should not be allowed to hold office. "Put none but Americans on guard;" that was the watchword, but not the rallying cry. They did not have any rallying cry. They operated in the dark. They were the "dark lantern" party. No public notice was given of their gatherings. No outsider knew where they met, or when. Nobody knew who belonged to the organization. It took in, as I understand, for I was never a member of the order, whigs and democrats, who pledged themselves to vote for no man who was not a native of this country. There was a strong lodge in Watertown, and it embraced the names of many of those who were Watertown's leading politicians. I have heard it stated that D. C. Calvin was a know-nothing, and that he owed his election as district attorney to the fact. For two or three years the institution played the mischief with the old organizations. The party ticket would be made in the usual way, but at the election it would be beaten out of sight. At many of the town meetings held in the spring of 1854 the old parties were utterly routed in their strongholds.



Strictly speaking, the know-nothing party originated under whig influences, but of course it found sympathy and support from portions of the democratic party. In 1853, as before remarked, it began its secret work by attempting to control primary caucuses and conventions, and thereafter endorsing and supporting such candidates as best represented its views. It made but little headway that year, carrying cities and wards here and there, to the surprise of everybody, and sending some representatives to the assembly in this state; but in the summer and autumn of 1854 it was well organized throughout the state by the institution of village or town "councils," as the local organizations were called, and each one was designated by its appropriate number, given according to priority of date of formation. Each county had its deputy grand master, whose duty it was to institute councils, initiate the charter members, and supervise matters generally, including the calling of conventions for determining action in the ensuing political contests in town, village, city or district elections. These local councils met in secret during the first two years of their organization. The notifications of extraordinary meetings were made by circular pieces of paper placed anywhere in the streets, while the stated ones were known by the members from time to time, as they stood adjourned. The question, "Have you seen Sam today?" was also a constructive notice of a pending meeting, which suggested inquiry of some brother informed thereon, and the words were likewise used as a challenge to anybody to discover whether or not they were initiates in the order. "What time is it?" was also a challenging phrase or communicating word. The ceremonies of initiation were simple, consisting merely of a short lecture of explanation of the motives and objects of the order, the administration of the oath to vote for no foreign-born or Roman Catholic persons for office,

and the communication of signs, grips and pass-words, as is usual with all secret societies. Candidates were voted for by ballot, and elected to membership if not more than two black balls appeared against them. The name of the order was never divulged to the council members. The REAL name was known only to the INSIDE organization, ("a wheel within a wheel,") composed of a few of the order in each county, and it is perhaps now for the first time revealed by a friend of the writer, who was "one of the few" who were "SONS OF SEVENTY-SIX."

So much we give for inside history. Now we proceed to results. In October of 1854, the know-nothing state council was held in New York city, composed of about 2,000 members from city, town and village councils, and after a number of ballots it nominated Daniel Ullman of New York for governor, and Gustavus Adolphus Scroggs of Buffalo for lieutenant governor. The whig party had already nominated Myron H. Clark for governor, the "soft" democrats Horatio Seymour, and the "hard" democrats Greene C. Bronson. The result was the election of Clark, the vote standing as follows: Clark 156,804, Seymour 156,495, Ullman 122,282, and Bronson 34,522. The legislature stood: senate, whigs 16, Americans 11, democrats 4, temperance 1; assembly, whigs 81, Americans 8, democrats 31, American and democrats 8.

During the next year (1855) the new party, then being generally known as "American," carried city after city and state after state, notwithstanding the increasing agitation over the slavery question set agoing by the Kansas-Nebraska imbroglio. New Hampshire in March elected a know-nothing governor and three members of congress; in November Massachusetts was swept by the new party, and so were Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, Virginia, California, Maryland, Kentucky and Texas. The know-nothings carried all their

state officers in New York, the vote being for secretary of state as follows: Headley, K. N., 148,557; Preston King, rep., 136,698; Hatch, "soft" dem., 91,336; Ward, "hard" dem., 59,353. To the legislature the republicans elected 16 senators and 33 assemblymen, know-nothings 11 senators and 44 assemblymen, and the democrats 4 senators and 50 assemblymen, and the whigs one assemblyman.

In 1856, the know-nothing or American party became a national one, and while still electing city officers and members of congress here and there, and coming before the people with nominations for the presidency and vice presidency, this time with Millard Fillmore for president and Andrew J. Donelson of Tennessee for vice president, it secured only the electoral vote of Maryland, the rest of the southern states and California, Illinois, Indiana, New Jersey and Pennsylvania voting for and electing Buchanan over Fremont. The popular vote was, Buchanan 1,834,337, Fremont 1,341,812, Fillmore 873,055.

In 1860, as all readers are aware, the country was in the midst of the most violent political convulsion it has ever seen, arising, of course, out of the various pending slavery questions; and while the American party had no expectation whatever of carrying the election before the people, it was not without hopes of success in the house, after failure in the electoral colleges. It had in affiliation those remnants of the old whig organization which had not already joined the newly formed republican party or the old democratic party. The Americans, however, carried Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia, and came within less than 500 of also carrying Missouri. Their candidates were John Bell of Tennessee and Edward Everett of Massachusetts.

The rebellion next year overshadowed everything of a strictly party character, and the American party went to its everlasting repose.

In the autumn of 1854 the organization of the party began in Jefferson county by instituting councils in different villages and towns, and the members made themselves influential in the party conventions. The nomination and election of Moses Eames to the assembly from the second district was secured by their secret efforts.

On the gubernatorial vote that year the show was not large in their favor. It stood : Clark, whig, 4,051 ; Seymour, "soft" dem., 3,758 ; Ullman, know-nothing, 1,796 ; Bronson, "hard" dem., 574.

In 1855, when the know-nothings carried their state ticket, as before shown, Jefferson county gave for Preston King, rep., for secretary of state, 4,097 ; Headley, know-nothing, 1,090 ; Hatch, "soft" dem., 2,832 ; Ward, "hard" dem., 733.

The Northern New York Journal, then a whig paper, was purchased and run in the interest of the know-nothings, under the management of C. Chauncey Burr, until he abandoned it at the collapse of the local organization.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

The Anti-Masons—On the Tribune Staff—Charles A. Dana—Power of the Tribune—Greeley's Writings Described—Something about His Boyhood.

The American or know-nothing party came up like "Jonah's gourd," in a night, and it went out of existence in the same way. It was made up, to a large extent, of persons who had belonged to the whig organization, and when it went down many of them went into the democratic camp. Some of the most intolerant democrats in the country were men who had always been identified with the whig party. James and Erastus Brooks, who were for a long time at the head of the New York Express, one of the most ultra whig papers in the nation, became silver grays, then know-nothings, and finally thorough-going democrats. This, at least, is true as to Erastus, and I think James went into the democratic organization by substantially the same route. I can understand very well why a great many persons are where they are politically; they are voting the same ticket they suppose their fathers did, or they are acting with the kind of people they like: but how a man who was reared as a New England whig, and engaged for years in writing against the men and measures of the democracy, should get round upon the other side, fall in love with everything labeled democratic, and denounce all his old associates as knaves and villains, I never could quite make out. There was no more bigoted anti-democratic sheet in New York than the Express while it was under the control of the Brookses, and there was no

more ferocious democratic print in the city than this same Express, under the management of the same men, after it went over to the democracy ; and great numbers of men followed their lead.

The political views of a good many persons undergo a change in the course of their lives, and it is not remarkable that this should be so. If a man considers that the course he is pursuing is wrong, or not the best one, he ought to change, and I do not see how a perfectly conscientious man can do otherwise. I have been amused at some of the changes that have occurred within my acquaintance. In the early part of my editorial career I had a very particular personal friend, who dissented *in toto* from my political notions. Both held the other in the highest estimation, but we never talked politics. When the republican party was organized I became a republican, and my friend, about the same time, went over to the party I had left, and became one of its chief leaders. Yet I never doubted that he was actuated by the same worthy motives I was.

It is interesting to observe how the masses are sometimes governed and led. When I went to western New York the anti-masonic excitement was in full blast. The anti-masons were uppermost throughout the old eighth district, and there was more bitterness and hatred to the square inch among them than I have ever seen in any other crowd. Talk about republican *hate* ! You ought to have lived in western New York in 1830, 1832, and so on for a dozen years. The pure and unadulterated anti-mason believed Morgan was murdered, and he seemed to think that every mason and all who did not join in the crusade against masonry ought to be put to death. The anties made it very hot for the poor masons, and obliged them to give up their charters and refrain from holding meetings. Political anti-masonry took root and flourished in Vermont, western New York, and the



“western reserve” in Ohio. It gained little foothold elsewhere; and why not? Why did it take hold of these localities with so firm a grasp and fail to secure lodgment elsewhere? Who can answer?

There is something very curious—and I have sometimes thought rather silly—in the way individuals get enlisted in politics and allow themselves to become partisans of this or that organization. How does it happen that the two leading parties are so evenly divided? Why do not the people range themselves all on one side, especially as the interest of the governed is precisely the same? How is it that one county is overwhelmingly democratic, and the adjoining one as thoroughly republican? How, unless

“There is a divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough hew them as we will.”

In the latter part of 1853, at the solicitation of Mr. Greeley, I took a position upon the Tribune staff, and remained in the establishment two years. Mr. C. A. Dana, now of the Sun, was the managing editor (because he looked after the conduct of the paper, directing what matter should go in and what not.) I make this explanation because it was the general supposition that Mr. Greeley performed that duty, whereas he knew little of the contents of the paper previous to its publication. Mr. Greeley, while constantly engaged in preparing lectures and delivering them, often in remote sections of the country, desired to do some of the editorial writing himself. For this sort of work he would have had no time had he been obliged to make himself acquainted with everything that went into the paper. It is the business of what is called the “managing editor” to superintend the work of every person engaged in the preparation of matter, and, in many cases, he directs how it shall be done. He examines all the editorials, and doctors them to suit himself. Then he looks after the corres-

pondence, which is enormously large in one of the great city journals, or was before the telegraph was used as freely as at present; likewise the literary, local and news departments. In a word, he wants to know what is in the paper. Of course he is kept exceedingly busy, and has little time to write anything himself beyond a paragraph. Some of these men have all they can do without writing a line. Mr. Dana was an uncommonly ready man. He acted intuitively. He seemed to know what was in an article and decided upon its merits when he had read the first half a dozen lines. He was able to perform a vast amount of work in his line. He had rare qualifications for the post he occupied. He could give a plain answer to a plain question as well as any other man. He never deliberated—he had no time to deliberate—but acted upon impulse; not always wisely, but he acted somehow. There was not the least hesitation about him. There are many excellent qualities about Charles A. Dana.

The Tribune staff at this time was a very strong one. In the Tribune directory, corrected May 10, 1854, it was stated that the editor was Horace Greeley, the managing editor Charles A. Dana, the associate editors, James S. Pike, William H. Fry, George Ripley, George M. Snow, Bayard Taylor, F. J. Ottarson, William Newman, B. Brockway, Solon Robinson and Donald C. Henderson. Ottarson was the city editor, Snow wrote the money articles, Ripley the book notices, Robinson looked after agricultural matters and the markets, while the other assistants named had specific duties assigned them. In addition to these there were about forty reporters and correspondents on the regular pay-roll, and many others who were compensated for special work. The Tribune was a great journal thirty years ago, in some respects a greater one than it has been at any time since. Mr. Greeley was in the prime of life, full of physical and men-

tal vigor, and most of his assistants were middle-aged men, who had been chosen for the positions they occupied because they had been suspected of having opinions and of being willing to express them. Though he did not look after details, his great and marvelously active brain energized the whole staff, and distinguished its work from that bestowed upon other journals, and gave the Tribune an influence such as no other paper has ever wielded in this country. Its earnest words went down to the popular heart, producing an impression that forced people to think and act. There was a clearness and power in Mr. Greeley's utterances that compelled the multitudes to see things as he did, to esteem those which he prized and despise those he hated.

Mr. Greeley was a great man. He was remarkable as a boy. He was a great reader, and remembered everything he read. As an illustration of this truth, I relate the following, which was communicated to me by the late Colonel John Atwood, formerly a clerk in the insurance department at Albany, and has never been in print: "Horace Greeley's father," said the colonel, "moved on to a farm adjoining my father's, in New Hampshire, being then our nearest neighbor, in the spring of 1818, and remained there two years. As Horace was born in the spring of 1811, his age at the time of my early acquaintance with him was from seven to nine years. During this entire time his prodigious memory was a matter of the greatest surprise throughout all the neighborhood. Being a boy myself, only two years older than Horace, of course I have only a boy's recollection, but I give you a single fact occurring within my own knowledge that will show young Greeley's wonderful memory. A girl had recently come into the neighborhood, by the name of Asenath, popularly called 'Senith. One morning, at our house, a dispute arose in our family as to the spelling of her

name. While the discussion was going on, Horace happened to come in. It was at once proposed to refer the matter to him, and all agreed to the proposition. He spelled the name without hesitation and correctly. One of the disputants, still doubting, inquired where the name was to be found. (Most readers, of course, understand that the name is a Bible name.) After scratching his head a moment, Horace replied, "In the 41st chapter of Genesis, 45th verse," and a reference to the family Bible confirmed the accuracy of the boy's memory.

"He and I attended together," continued the colonel, "the same district school in the winter two or three months. We were of too much importance on our farms to be spared during the rest of the year. While at this school he commenced the study of grammar in the old-fashioned way, and I have a distinct recollection that he recited Murray's grammar, 'orthography, etymology, syntax and prosody,' entirely through in two lessons! Two whole forenoons were occupied with these lessons, and before winter was out he was able to answer all the questions in the book." On this subject of grammar Mr. Greeley himself wrote in 1845, "Grammar came hard to me. I commenced at six years of age, and having but little schooling, wasted the best part of what I had, for it was several years before I discovered that our standard authors on that subject knew nothing about it—Lindley Murray especially, the intense blockhead, whose gross blunders I ought to have detected at seven years of age, but did not till ten or eleven. That obtuseness of perception put me back sadly, and I had to learn what I know of grammar after I had devoted more time to it than should have been required in all. Ten weeks with the books we now have are worth more than ten months with such as I learned from."

"How did you succeed in arithmetic?" Atwood inquired of Mr. Greeley, when both had become young men.

“Well, when I reached that,” replied Mr. Greeley, “I didn’t find anything to learn ;” that is to say, when he took up this study in the school-room he found there was nothing new in it ; for somewhere he had got hold of a copy of Daboll or Pike, gone through it and mastered its contents. Mr. Greeley says, in the letter from which I have just quoted, “No higher branch of learning has come so easy to me as arithmetic, which seemed but play. I cannot remember when I did not know the multiplication table, though I must have learned it, of course. After learning what figures mean, and what relation they bear to each other, all beyond seemed to flow naturally from the axiom that two and two make four.”

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

Horace Greeley as Seen in Daily Life—Habits of Work—His Remarkable Memory—Command of Language—Intense in Everything—A Courteous Man—The Strong and Weak Points of the Later Franklin.

I was in the office with Mr. Greeley, as I have already stated, two years. I saw more or less of him every day when he was in the city, and will give the reader some idea of the man as he appeared in daily life.

Mr. Greeley was not, ordinarily, a man of many words. His custom was to come to the office between twelve and one o'clock in the afternoon. Usually his capacious pockets were filled with newspapers, and he often had in his hands the latest edition of the Tribune, which he was engaged in reading. I don't remember that he ever said "Good morning" to anybody, but, proceeding straight to his desk, he relieved his pockets of their contents and entered at once upon his work. If there chanced to be anything in the paper that did not suit him, or if any matter was treated in a way he did not approve, he did not hesitate to make known the fact and state his own convictions in the most unmistakable terms. He criticised whatever he considered deserving criticism—even to the make-up and mechanical appearance of the paper, and was especially severe on typographical errors. For these he wanted no apologies and would hear none. "Typesetters," he was wont to observe, "are not expected to know anything; but we employ the best talent that money and good prices can command for proof-readers, and there is nothing to be said in extenuation of their short-comings." Unlike some editors who fail to read their own papers, Mr. Greeley read the Tribune



—read it thoroughly, knew what was in it—and if there was anything there that should not be, or if anything had been omitted that the sheet should have contained, woe to the offender. I don't mean that he was an habitual fault finder ; perhaps it would be nearer the truth to say he rarely complained ; but he did find fault when he considered there was occasion for it, and he was not mealy-mouthed, either. I have seen him, as Dana says, “scold like a drab, as ferocious as a baited bear.” It is equally true that when a thing appeared which struck him as being particularly well done, he referred to it in terms of praise, such as the article deserved. “That article was cleverly written,” he would say. When a production was thus characterized, you might be sure it was a creditable performance ; indeed, that it could not be easily excelled.

His first business was to open and answer such letters as had come to hand, after which the “regular order of the day” was taken up, the preparation of matter for the next day's Tribune. He generally remained till 4 or 5 o'clock, when he went out for dinner, sometimes returning in the evening and sometimes not. When at home, and not engaged in speaking somewhere about New York, I think he was usually at the office in the evening, and remained while he conceived there was anything to be done. I have seen men who composed more rapidly than he did, though he wrote without hesitation—without stopping to think—and got over a half sheet of foolscap in a way one might call “good time.” Although he wrote an illegible hand, it was uniform—some might call it uniformly bad—yet if you could read it at all you found it made good sense, and was finished ; that is, it was written exactly as its author intended it should read when put in type, every comma, semicolon or other mark of punctuation being precisely where he wished it. He erased and interlined very little, though he would oc-

casionally cross out a word and insert what he considered a preferable one, and sometimes, I think, interlined one of his peculiarly expressive adjectives.

I have seen him go to sleep with his pen in his hand, with an editorial before him half finished, and complete it after waking. In fact, I was impressed with the idea that he went to sleep when fatigued—when nature was exhausted and *would have repose*—and the same thing appeared to me to a great extent true as to his habits of eating. He apparently went without eating until he was hungry—until an empty stomach bade him in emphatic language to go and eat—when he heeded the call and partook of a sufficient quantity of food to satisfy two ordinary men. And he was not a Grahamite, either; at least, he was not whenever I dined with him—for he called for roast beef, and a good deal of it, too. He wanted three or four times the quantity I did. I think he always partook of plain dishes, but he wanted plenty to eat, and he ate with a relish, and not as a dyspeptic. The last time I sat down to the table with him—it was in the evening and at a New York restaurant—he called for a bowl of crackers and milk, and when it was brought him, he said to the waiter, “Boy, bring me another,” and he swallowed them both in just about three minutes. He ate, as he did everything, in a hurry. He worked with all his might; he ate in the same way.

“When busy,” as some one has said, “Mr. Greeley was no respecter of persons. Congressman or hod-carrier, clergyman or express driver, general or boot-black, authoress or apple-woman, were alike to him, and treated in the same manner.” I have been present when he was called upon by the governor of the state while engaged at his desk.

“Good afternoon, Mr. Greeley; I have called to have a few moments’ conversation with you in regard to a cer-

tain subject"—naming it. Turning partly around in his chair, Mr. Greeley would say :

"Ah, governor, go on ; I will hear you," and resume his writing.

The governor commences, addressing his words to one who is apparently paying no attention to him.

When he reaches a period, Mr. Greeley stops writing, turns around in his chair, and gives his views in the fewest possible words ; and this he does repeatedly during the interview, and perhaps in the end expresses himself more at length and fully, and then goes on with his work.

The governor rises to leave, saying, "Good day, Mr. Greeley," but that personage is so far on in the work before him, so lost in the elaboration of a sentence, that he does not hear the chief magistrate of the commonwealth, or if he does, he fails to make response, and the governor goes away without receiving a return to his parting salutation.

You say that Mr. Greeley was uncivil—that he disregarded the ordinary amenities of life. You are quite mistaken.

Half an hour later, a couple of timid young ladies, evidently from the country, by dint of patient inquiry and extraordinary perseverance, commencing at the counting-room, and working their way into the fourth story of the Tribune building, at length find themselves in the editorial rooms of the great newspaper. There are a dozen men there, all so busy that they do not even look up, and if you speak to one of them, you will get an exceedingly curt "no," or "dont know," for answer ; and the more inquiries you address to *that* crowd, the less you will find out.

Of all that dozen men not one pays the least heed to their words, save the elderly gentleman in the further room, the editor-in-chief, who drops his pen, rises to his

feet, and advancing toward them with a face radiant with smiles of welcome—a countenance in which there is a singular blending of simplicity, good-will and sympathy—says :

“Oh, ah, I will show you around,” and, putting on his hat, he conducts the ladies into the composing-room, where also the stereotyping is done, in the upper story of the building, (of course I am speaking of the old Tribune building and not of the present tall edifice,) explains the objects and uses of everything there ; then descends to the next story, and to the next, and next, till he is finally in the basement, where there is a ponderous steam engine that is never idle—at least, I never saw it when it was not in motion—where also are the great power presses, capable of giving 20,000 impressions in an hour, with mountains of unprinted paper, and an army of men and boys engaged in folding and mailing the latest edition. Mr. Greeley devotes a full hour to these rustic girls ; he is as simple as a country boy ; his explanations are full and in the highest degree instructive ; he shows his visitors all the attention they require, just the attention to which they are entitled, and finally takes leave of them as handsomely as he received them.

Do you say that Mr. Greeley was destitute of good manners ; that he was wanting in civility ? Did he not treat these young ladies as they deserved to be treated ?

The governor of the state did not require unnecessary, unmeaning words ; whereas his lady visitors, who were without escort, deserved the polite attention they received.

“Was Mr. Greeley a profane man ?” is a question that has sometimes been asked. In a general sense he was not ; and yet it is quite true that there were subjects he did not think he could express his abhorrence of in sufficiently emphatic language without employing the adjective damn. I doubt if he ever spoke of the rum

traffic in his life without styling it "the damn rum traffic." The theatre was usually referred to as "the damn theatre;" while disorderly houses and disorderly persons were characterized in the same manner. I have seen him, when highly excited, express himself in even stronger language, but in ordinary conversation his speech was as unexceptionable as that of the most exemplary man in the country.

Having dropped in at Plymouth church one Sunday evening, I visited the office afterwards, and Mr. Greeley happening to come near my desk, I said, "I have just come from Beecher's church; he gave his hearers a good thing; shall I make a notice of it?"

"I guess so," he replied; "we have done nothing lately but puff the d—n theatres; its about time we did something for religion."

Mr. Greeley's memory was most wonderful. Even when he did not appear to be paying attention to you, he heard what you were saying, and months, if not years afterwards, he would quote your position and language correctly. Having perused an article, his memory of its contents was still more perfect; in fact, it seemed to be almost without limit.

I remember that when James E. Pugh was chosen U. S. senator from Ohio, the telegram came upon my desk. There had been a protracted struggle over the senatorship in that state, and I do not remember that Pugh's name had been mentioned. But the contest was settled at last, and a dispatch announcing the election of Pugh was received. He was a new man to me. Mr. Greeley was writing at his desk, and I said: "Mr. Greeley, they have chosen James E. Pugh senator in Ohio; who is he?" He turned around in his chair, and gave me a history of the man, from his boyhood up. He told me where he was born, and when, and recounted the various acts of his life, going into particulars as fully as he



could have done had he been brought up by his side and known him all his days ; and I mention this only as a sample of his thorough knowledge of the men of his time, and his astonishing memory. His recollection of dates and figures was still more extraordinary. In 1854 the city editor and the writer were detailed from the staff to assist him in receiving and making up the returns of the state election. The contest, such as it was, was a triangular one between Myron H. Clark, Horatio Seymour and Daniel Ullman. I have rarely been more amused than upon that occasion. Mr. Greeley shrieked and groaned, shouted and sighed (and I won't be sure that he did not indulge in some profanity) during the entire night. But his knowledge of the state and the way it had voted in previous years was the most wonderful feature in the exhibition. Had a map of the state been spread out before him, and on it written the figures given in the different townships during the preceding ten years, he could not have known the facts better than he did. Receiving the returns from half a dozen towns in a particular locality, "Hallo!" Mr. Greeley would exclaim, "that elects such a man (giving his name) to the legislature." Other returns would insure the election of this man to congress, and others would make sure the defeat of one of his particular friends. He seemed to instantly comprehend the effect of every return received—whom it was going to help and whom damage. When friends whom he valued were successful, he indulged in the most immoderate rejoicing, whooping so that he might have been heard a quarter of a mile off. When defeated he groaned piteously, so that he was either vociferous in his demonstrations of satisfaction or deeply depressed by almost every result chronicled.

It has always seemed to me that his prodigious memory was the distinguishing feature in his intellect. He was also a good observer. He saw most visible objects



as he passed through life. He was, moreover, a tremendous worker. He performed the labor of a whole regiment of men, and a great deal more intellectual labor than any regiment ever did perform. He was always at work. He worked because he could not help it. There was an influence behind him or above him that impelled him onward; that was pushing him all the time; that kept him busy every moment when he was awake; that did not allow him requisite time for sleep and rest; that gave him no opportunity for recreation, and that eventually wore him out.

He had a great command of language. Few men have lived that could express themselves upon paper more forcibly. He knew exactly what he wanted to say, and he could clothe his ideas in such words that every reader, no matter how ignorant and unlettered, could catch his precise meaning.

He was thoroughly in earnest. He was not always right—he was human, like the rest of us—but he sincerely believed in the truthfulness of whatever he wrote at the time of writing. Very often he saw only one side of the question; he was therefore only partly right. Unlike Henry J. Raymond, who, according to Mr. Greeley, saw both sides to such an extent as to be troubled to distinguish the one from the other, Mr. Greeley saw but one side. That to his vision was the right one, and it was not his fault if his readers did not arrive at the same conclusion.

He had his weak points. He erred in his judgment of men. Himself artless, he gave his fellow beings credit for possessing more virtue and a greater regard for principle than they really possessed. He did not know anything about playing tricks himself, and was therefore off his guard when approached by scamps, and was an easy prey to dead-beats and swindlers.

Another of his weaknesses was his impatience. He thought the world might be reformed in a day—in his

day. When a thing was to be done, his idea was that it was to be done *now*—this very day and hour. “The way to resumption *is to resume*,” and the remark shows the manner in which his mind acted. He was a failure in congress and in our last constitutional convention, mainly in consequence of the great number of slow coaches and incompetents in those bodies. He thought 160 first-class men ought to be able to frame a very fair constitution in from 30 to 60 days, and he was for commencing the sessions of the convention at 8 o’clock in the morning, and laboring right on until the work was finished. But he found himself surrounded by one hundred and more lawyers who were not in the habit of getting up and at work at 8 in the morning. Not much. They thought 11 or 12 a better hour; and that if the convention completed its labors in nine months or a year it would do pretty well. They were getting \$6 per day, and that was more than a majority of them could make at home. The consequence was, Mr. Greeley became disgusted, and after the convention had been in session three or four months, he packed up and left. And in this connection a good story is told, which I believe has not been in print.

There were three notoriously long-winded talkers in the convention—men who were always on their feet. Now it happened that one of these windy members was addressing the convention when Mr. Greeley withdrew. Well, he went away, and was absent about a month, as I remember, when, happening to be passing through the old Dutch capital, it occurred to him he would look into the convention and see what progress it was making. As luck would have it, the identical individual who was holding forth when he left, again had the floor. As he looked in, he raised his hands in horror, and exclaimed :

“Great God! *Hasn’t that d——n fool finished his speech yet!*”

Mr. Greeley was in some respects odd and peculiar, as most people are who *make their mark* in the world. But I have had the impression that a good many of his idiosyncrasies resulted from the fact that he was destitute of A HOME—of a wife to see that his shirt collar was put on right side up and his necktie properly adjusted. I know he was to some extent careless, perhaps I should say indifferent, to his personal appearance ; but for that very reason he should have had a companion to care *for* him, to see that his clothes were in proper condition, and put on as they should have been ; and if he had had a wife of that stamp, I think he would have escaped much of the talk respecting his dress and personal appearance.

Mr. Greeley had his gloomy hours, his seasons of despondency, as well as his cheerful ones. He had his ups and downs, and the distance between the two extremes was immeasurable. When in an unhappy mood, he was simply wretched, an object of real pity. The revulsion in his feelings after the battle of Bull Run was such as to send him to his couch sick, where he remained several weeks, threatened with softening of the brain. The attack which ultimately carried him off was similar in kind, but of a more violent type, while his physical system, from long watching at the bedside of his dying wife, had become so impaired that he sank under the weight of his ills.

Horace Greeley, though not a perfect man—the yield of that sort of people in the world is not large—was a very good kind of a man, at least by comparison, for he was better than many others. He was better than Franklin. Indeed, I should style him the Franklin of *his* age, a new edition of the old work, revised and corrected by the light of a higher civilization.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

Greeley's Domestic Life—Patience under Adverse Circumstances—Peculiarities of Mrs. Greeley—A Visit to Chappaqua—An Evening's Experiences.

In my last I intimated pretty strongly that Mr. Greeley was without a home, which I believe is substantially true. He lived at boarding-houses and at hotels, and sometimes in his own dwelling, for he owned one or two houses in the city, as well as the farm at Chappaqua. He permitted Mrs. Greeley to run the domestic establishment, and she did it in a way peculiar to herself. I am not inclined to criticise her. She was a female crank, born so, and could not help doing as she did. Some considered her partially insane; others thought she was simply ugly. I do not undertake to decide which party was right. I am satisfied that she did not know how to keep house. She was born in Connecticut, a school teacher by occupation, and was mistress of a little school in North Carolina when Mr. Greeley married her. She did not have the knack of making a home.

Mr. Greeley occupied and I believe owned a house on 19th street; but he did not live there. He was there occasionally; but he oftener had rooms at some hotel, and stopped there weeks at a time. There were none of the comforts of home at his house, and Mrs. Greeley sometimes made things decidedly disagreeable. It has been stated to me as a truth that she would sometimes enter the apartment in which he was doing his writing, and snatch his manuscripts and throw them into the fire. Of course it was not pleasant living in that way, and he would, without uttering a word of complaint, go to a

hotel and re-write the papers destroyed. I don't think he ever felt at home at his city residence—never felt free to invite friends there—but he did sometimes ask people to go with him to Chappaqua, and he seemed to feel more at home there himself than anywhere else. It appeared to afford him great relief to visit his plantation Friday night and busy himself upon it Saturday.

The following, from another hand, giving an account of Mrs. Greeley, throws some light on Mr. Greeley's home life, and will serve to introduce my own experience :

It seems to me that the time has come when the truth about Horace Greeley's domestic life can be told without seriously hurting anybody's feelings. It has been whispered around New York a good many years, and perhaps will be less likely to be exaggerated and misunderstood if put in plain type. His domestic life was unfortunate and uncomfortable, and this was partly the result and partly the cause of his own eccentric habits.

Sidney Howard Gay, one of the Tribune's best editorial managers in those old days, insists that Horace Greeley is a myth, like Hercules, Diana, Hebe and Mrs. Harris. "There never was any such man," he said to me a while ago. "When the truth is known it will be seen that the Horace Greeley of popular fancy never existed, and that the real Horace Greeley was a person of attributes diametrically the reverse." I think he is mistaken here, and that the real Greeley, though somewhat different from the ideal Greeley, is assuredly the same individual.

In the fall of 1861 I came here to engage Mr. Greeley to go to Washington and lecture. Inquiry at the Tribune office took me to his house on Nineteenth street. I rang long and repeatedly, and at last a lady came downstairs to the door, with sleeves tucked briskly up her arm, and her hair twisted to a knot on top of her head. The following conversation took place:

"Is Mr. Greeley in?"

"He is not."

"Do you know where he is?"

"I do not. He is not stopping here now."

"Can I see Mrs Greeley?"

"You can; I am Mrs. Greeley."

"Do—was—is—does Mr. Greeley come home sometimes?"

"Occasionally. He has not been home this week."

"Do you know where he is stopping?"

"I do not. He stopped at the Everett house last week."

I went down to that hotel and inquired. They said that he was at the New York hotel, and there I found him raging up and down his room and storming over a pile of dispatches on the table. I seemed *de trop*, and inquired what was the matter.



"Matter!" he repeated, in his high falsetto voice, "enough, I should think; battle yesterday at Pittsburg Landing; rebels whipped us, of course. Our soldiers are being driven into Tennessee today. Our generals are drunk. Buell ought to be shot, and Grant ought to be hung!"

After a while he quieted down sufficiently to enable me to do my errand and take my leave.

I have met a lady this week who was intimately acquainted with the Greeley household for twenty years.

"Mrs. Greeley," she says, "had not the knack of making a home. She was always clean, but never neat; never neat in appearance, I mean, because she was always washing something and always disheveled. I have seen her take her children, without a garment on them, out into the street, and pump water on them to wash them. When I was there one day the servant washed out an apron of her own and hung it out to dry. Mrs. Greeley jumped up, and seizing a carving knife, rushed out and cut out the piece of line containing the apron, and flung it to the girl, saying, 'How dare you hang your apron on the same line with my baby's clothes!' There was neatness for you.

"Yet when they lived on Nineteenth street she kept three goats in the house for the children to play with, and when I let one of my servants go there to live, she came running back to me the next day, saying, 'I won't live there, missus, never!' I asked her what was the matter. 'Sure, I have no bed at all, but must just bunk down on the pile of hay they got for the goats!'

"Mr. Greeley asked me one Sunday to come around in the morning and go to Chapin's with him. I went, and when I got there, there was a fracas going on in the vestibule—he and his wife and the children and the goats were all mixed up together.

"'The question is,' said Mr. Greeley, 'whether the goats shall go up Broadway with us. Mother insists that I shan't go to church unless I go at the head of the procession of children and goats. That seems more like a secular following.' I believe we got off at last without them, though Mrs. Greeley said, 'It's only your cussed pride.'

"Mrs. Greeley had an antipathy for kid gloves; she would never put them on. I remember a bout she had with Margaret Fuller on this subject. We all met on the street, and instead of saying 'good morning, or some such human salutation, Mrs. Greeley touched Margaret's hand with a little shudder, and said, 'Skin of a beast, skin of a beast!' 'Why, what do you wear?' inquired the astonished maiden from Maine. 'Silk,' said Mrs. Greeley, reaching out her hand. Margaret just touched it, and shuddered, crying, 'Entrails of a worm!'

"I was once in a stage with Mrs. Greeley, going up Madison avenue, when she suddenly pulled the strap, whisked a tin pail out from under her shawl, and, reaching it out to Rev. Dr. Brett, in the other end of the 'bus, to whom we had just bowed, said, 'You get out, please, and run to the bakery on the corner and get me two cents' worth of yeast!' Mr. Brett laughed, but he



good-naturedly got out, went to the shop, and brought the coveted bread exhilarator, the driver waiting meantime, his serenity broken only by a smile.

"When Mr. Brett returned he handed the little pail to Mrs. Greeley, with the remark that bread was evidently kneaded, to which she replied, 'Hm!—old joke.'

"She was very eccentric—Mrs. Greeley was. He once told me that the day before, while going down to Staten Island on the ferry boat, she walked calmly up to a passenger who was smoking, snatched the cigar out of his mouth, and flung it overboard. 'I expected to be knocked down on the spot that minute,' said Mr. Greeley."

Finding the foregoing in a newspaper published in the western part of the state, I feel warranted in giving to the public an extract from my journal, jotted down in August, 1857.

Meeting Mr. Greeley in New York, he asked me to go home with him. He wished me to see his farm, especially the new barn he had just completed. As I did not happen to have other engagements, I consented. He lived at Chappaqua, a station on the Harlem railroad, about thirty-five miles from New York. Arriving at the station, I was somewhat surprised to hear him say, "I guess we had better register at the hotel; you may want to stay all night." I assented to the proposition, and entered my name on the hotel register. We then proceeded to the Greeley mansion, a plain story and a half or two story wood dwelling, standing in a pretty dense forest. It was painted white, and had green blinds. It should not have cost over \$1,500 or \$2,000. Three minutes' walk brought us to the house. A little girl was standing upon the piazza.

"I am dreadful glad to see you, Ida," said Mr. Greeley.

The child made no response—did not smile—and seemed to regard with entire indifference her father, (for the little girl was the daughter of Mr. G.,) as well as his pleasant salutation, though he had been absent nearly a week.

The piazza led into a sitting-room, in which were two domestics, one of them nursing an infant three months old. Mr. G. spoke caressingly to the infant in the nurse's arms, and then disappeared through a doorway in the rear of the sitting-room, and thence up a flight of stairs. In a few moments he returned, accompanied by Mrs. Greeley.

"Mr. Brockway," said Mr. Greeley, when I gave her my hand, which she received solemnly, and, I believe, without speaking.

Mrs. Greeley was a woman rather below the medium size, thin, with dark hair and eyes. She had thin lips, irregular and somewhat defective teeth. There was little expression in her face, but that little was rather against her. She spoke quick—not peevishly, nor angrily, as a rule, but her words had a kind of crack like the report of a rifle.

After the introduction, Mr. G. said he desired to show me over his farm, and thought he would do it before supper. A description of this tour of his premises is here given in my diary, but I will omit it, and bring the reader directly back to the house. Ascending the front steps, we found Mrs. Greeley standing in the doorway.

"Things have gone on very well on the farm, mother, since I went away," said Mr. G., addressing his wife.

"They haven't gone well in the house, Mr. Greeley. The roof has leaked ; it has rained down all over the house, and—and—wet everything, and everything is—is—being ruined and spoiled."

These words and many others of the same purport came from the gentle Mrs. G. like so many electrical discharges.

A lull ensued, when Mr. Greeley calmly and good-naturedly replied :

"No, mother, I don't think everything will be spoiled. I have tried to find Mr. C., whom you desire to fix the

house, but he has gone west. When he returns I will see him at once, and have him remedy the difficulty. You know you will not allow any one else to repair the roof."

"We shall want supper, mother," continued Mr. Greeley. I haven't had anything to eat since morning, and I am beginning to feel hungry."

Recollecting that we had traveled two or three hours through heat and dust, Mr. G. inquired :

"Can we not have a basin of clean water, mother? We want to wash."

A tin wash basin, half filled with water, was brought and placed on the seat on the piazza ; also a clean towel.

Mr. G. beginning to make preparations to use it, "mother," in a rather unmotherly manner, spoke out :

"You are not going to wash in that water? One's enough to wash in one dish."

Perceiving his dilemma, Mr. G. quickly but quietly observed to me :

"You wash here, and I will go upstairs and wash."

In a few moments Mr. G. returned, when he said :

"It is growing dark, and I think we shall have time to go and see the garden before supper. Would you like to see it?" addressing me. Signifying my assent, we started together for the garden, which was a dozen or more rods from the house, down a rather steep bank.

When about half way down the declivity, we heard a pretty sharp voice in our rear :

"I thought you wanted supper. It is ready."

"We will be back in a few moments, mother," returned Mr. G.

And in the course of ten minutes we did return, and went to supper. By this time it was quite dark in the room, and there was no light on the table.

"Where shall I sit, mother?" asked Mr. G.

Mrs. G. pointed to one of the four chairs around the table, and Mr. G. invited me to occupy another. Mrs. G. sat opposite her husband and Ida opposite me.

“Will you have cocoa or milk?” asked Mrs. G., addressing me.

I replied that I would have cocoa, whereupon a cup was poured out. Then there was a search—in the dark—for milk wherewith to flavor the same.

“Where is the pitcher of milk?” demanded Mrs. G.

After a pause—“Oh, ah, I have used that, mother,” replied Mr. G., who, it appears, had inconsiderately taken up the pitcher and emptied its contents into a bowl near him, which he was rapidly making way with.

A further supply of milk was here ordered; my cocoa was tempered and handed me, in the dark. Then came the bread, and then the butter, and afterward a saucer pretty well filled with custard, all of which I partook of, and will do Mrs. G. the justice to say they were good. The custard was specially commended by Mr. G. He “wished he could obtain such an article in the city. It was never sweet enough there, and he supposed the eggs were not always fresh.”

“This was sweetened with maple sugar; that’s what gives it its flavor,” returned Mrs. G.; thereupon the qualities of maple sugar were warmly endorsed for the sweetening of custard.

The writer neither concurred nor dissented, but will say that he has eaten a great deal better custard than Mrs. Greeley’s, and when there was no maple sugar used.

There was apple-sauce on the table—at least, I was asked to partake of it, but declined, and therefore can not speak of it. By the time supper was over—if a meal composed of bread and butter and milk, apple-sauce, custard and cocoa can be called a supper—it was nearly dark; as evidence of the fact, I remark that I tried in vain to determine the hour of the evening by looking at the dial of my time-piece. Still there was no light for at least fifteen minutes after supper was over.

There was no light, indeed, until I had made repeated efforts to determine the time of night, and was compelled to ask information on the subject, which inquiry resulted in the production of about two inches of tallow candle, which, when lighted, emitted about as much light as one might expect from a tallow dip.

Mr. Greeley complained that he could see nothing by it, and inquired of "mother" whether she could not furnish a better one.

The reply was, that the light was "good enough."

At length we drew back from the table, and uncovering the basket he had brought with him from the city—a large willow market basket—Mr. G. drew up by the side of his wife, with the view of disclosing to her the contents. He said he thought it contained articles that would please her. The first thing taken out was a calfskin nicely rolled up, which was handed Mrs. Greeley.

She looked at the roll, smelled of it, condemned it as good for nothing, unrolled it, smelled of it again, declared it "horrid," stuck it up to her husband's proboscis, and then to her own again, and finally threw it under the table in evident disgust.

"Don't you—can't you smell anything disagreeable about it, Mr. G.?" inquired "mother."

"It smells of tanner's oil, as all new leather does. I don't smell anything else about it. But it is a good skin," continued Mr. G. "I went to my shoemaker and told him to send out and purchase for me the very best calfskin he could obtain in the city, and he procured this, and it must be a good one. I don't suppose there are three better ones to be found there. Just look at it and see how fine the grain is."

Whereupon it was again examined by Mrs. G., who was forced to admit that it had a fine grain, but she could not endure anything which smelled like that.



Another package was taken from the basket, which appeared to be a pair of shoes which Mrs. Greeley had ordered made for herself in the city.

"Have you paid for them?" was the first interrogatory.

Being answered in the affirmative, "What did you pay?" was the next inquiry.

"I paid two dollars."

"Why did you pay for them? How did you know they would suit?"

Continuing to remove the paper in which they had been put up, and at length reaching the shoes, Mrs. G. broke out:

"Why, these will never do. They are too large, a great deal too large. They won't fit me at all."

"How do you know, mother? You haven't tried them on. You had better try them."

"I don't want to try them. Haven't I got eyes, and can't I tell whether a shoe will fit me, or whether it is a rod too large? You can carry them straight back. I don't want them."

This ended the argument touching the shoes, and a third package was taken from the basket.

"Here is a pair of rubbers for Ida," said Mr. G., handing them to "mother" minus the paper covering.

"What horrible things, Mr. Greeley?" said the sweet wife; "why, they are too heavy. They didn't want to only cover the bottom of the foot, and here you have gone and got a pair of rubbers suitable for a boy, to be worn in winter."

"Why, you know better than to get a pair of shoes of this sort. Ida's feet sweat very much with any kind of shoes, and here you have gone and got a great, heavy pair of shoes, heavy enough for a man. Why, they'd kill the child; she shall never, never wear them."



"But, mother, you said you wanted a pair with broad soles, and I got them. You said you wanted them to come up high in the instep, and these do."

"These soles are broad all the way from the toe to the heel, and they are too thick in the instep. They won't do. Ida shall never wear them. She has a teaspoonful of perspiration in her shoes every day, and do you think I will allow her to wear these things? No; you can take them back. How came you to get them? I—I wonder that you didn't know better! You don't seem to exercise the least judgment in buying anything for the family. If you had any sense, you wouldn't bring anything of this kind into the house; you can take them back soon as you please."

"Why, mother, I took a good deal of pains in buying them. I went down to a store in Maiden Lane, where is kept the best assortment in the city, and I tried to find just such a pair as you spoke of."

"Why didn't you go round to the different stores? You never go to more than one place."

"I haven't time to go to all the stores, mother. I always go to the largest and best, because I am more likely to find what I want there. In this case, I got just the sort of a shoe I asked for, and thought they would suit."

"Come here, Ida, and let me try them on." "They are too big for me," said Ida.

"But come here and sit on my knee and let me put them on."

"They won't do; I know they won't," said Ida.

"But perhaps they will," continued the father. "Come and sit on my knee, and I will try one of them on. Come."

After a good deal of coaxing and urging, the child was induced to go to her father and sit upon his knee, which she did very awkwardly, and with evident reluct-

ance. The shoe was tried ; result not reported. Then followed a running conversation on the subject of Mr. Greeley's purchases generally—his ability to make them—in the course of which it came out that Mrs. G. had obtained precisely the pair of shoes she had ordered, made, in fact, to order. On all points she was worsted in the argument, and a lull ensued.

Taking advantage of it, Mr. G. took from the basket a copy of Putnam's Magazine, and proposed to read from it.

"But first we must have a little more light on the subject. Can't we have a better light, mother? Let us have a better light, and I will read a little. Wouldn't you like that, mother?"

"I don't want to hear any reading, and the light is good enough. I believe there are a few sperm or adamantine candles, but the one you are using is good enough—good enough for you."

"But, mother, it is difficult to read by this light. I should complain of it down in the city. Can you not let me have a better?"

This appeal was successful, and a better light brought out.

"Now, shall I read?" inquired Mr. G. "No, I don't want to hear any reading."

"But I have the latest number, and there are several good things in it."

"I don't want to listen to any reading," And she didn't.

Then Rufus Wilmot Griswold and others were discussed, and finally the affairs of the farm and its management.

A garden engine, it seems, had been allowed to remain in the hot sun, and the India-rubber hose or pipe connected with it had been impaired. Mr. Greeley remarked that it was difficult to find a man who would take the same interest in another's affairs he did in his

own. If he could be at home the whole time things would be looked after more carefully than they were now. His employes did as well as he could expect, but perhaps not as well as they might.

"But," suggested Mrs. G., "if I had the charge of affairs, I would give my directions, and they should be obeyed."

"Why, mother, you have charge here—in my absence, at least," rejoined Mr. G.

"*Damn it*, no I haven't!" was her amiable response. "I'm a cipher here—a mere slave. I've no rights; no attention is paid me; no respect is shown me. You know this is so."

This, and much more in the same strain, was spoken, but so rapidly that it would be hardly possible to report it were it worth while.

At length I concluded to return to the hotel where the lodgings had been secured.

"I guess you had better decide to remain all night, and we will look over the farm more in detail in the morning," said Mr. G.

"*He can't stay here!*" interposed Mrs. G.

"Of course not," returned Mr. G. "I thought you understood that lodgings had been engaged at the hotel."

Here I took my departure from the house, to the relief of my hostess, probably—most certainly to my own, though I can not say I was altogether displeased with what I witnessed. I pitied, felt incensed, and disgusted, and yet at times I was a good deal amused. I spent an hour and a half inside the house—perhaps two hours. Only once during that time did Mrs. G. speak kindly and pleasantly, and that was in response to a remark of mine. I said: "Mr. Greeley, I wonder that you did not build a log-house when you came into these woods; it would have been so in keeping with everything else here."

“Oh, yes,” chattered Mrs. G., “a dear little log-house, how cosy and nice it would be! I should like a log-house; how pleasant it might be made; I always did like a log-house.”

To her husband she did not speak one gentle, kind, cheerful word. She spoke only to criticise, reprove or berate. On the other hand, he employed only the kindest, most affectionate, most endearing terms. The more frantic her language and manner, the more bland and kind were his expressions. I believe he loved his wife devotedly, and it is not for me to say that she did not love him as well. I can only say, if she did, she had a most extraordinary way of manifesting her devotion.

I will here add that the occurrences above related I have every reason to believe were not uncommon ones in Mr. Greeley's house. They certainly were not if his brother's testimony is to be relied on, for he told me there was nothing unusual in the scenes I witnessed, and his sister, Mrs. Bush, confirmed the statement.

Alice Cary, who used to visit the Greeleys, has said she was never there in her life when she was not insulted by Mrs. Greeley.

In fact, it is quite evident that she had her peculiarities as well as her husband. Whether she was insane, or nervous, or simply ugly, I do not undertake to decide.

## CHAPTER XXX.

More About Chappaqua—A Description of the Farm—Mr. Greeley's Devotion to His Family -His Need of a Real Home—Bayard Taylor's Anecdote.

While describing Mr. Greeley's editorial habits, I ought to have stated that he occasionally took it into his head to go through the Tribune "exchanges." I do not now refer to the city journals, copies of which were to be placed on his desk as a matter of course, but to the country press. Once a week, or as often as he had opportunity, he wanted to examine all the country exchanges. He devoted hours to looking them over, to clipping items from them, appending thereto such comments as the reading might suggest. This was pastime to him; through these exchanges he felt the pulse of the country. Of course he could not do this every day. He would not have found time to attend to anything else, for he never looked over a newspaper or read a paragraph when it did not provoke remark of some sort.

The farm at Chappaqua consisted, I think, of sixty acres. There were forty in the original purchase, and twenty were subsequently added. It is situated close to the station thus entitled, on the Harlem railroad. Mr. Greeley's dwelling was something like one-fourth of a mile east of the depot. Trees were growing close by the house, and the steps to the piazza leading into the sitting-room were perforated by a live hemlock, on which a hop vine was climbing. The residence consisted of a sitting-room and parlor on the ground floor and sleeping rooms above. Connected with the upright part was an L running back, in which there was a kitchen, wood-house, &c. What struck me as singular was the fact that there was

not the sign of a carpet about the house. There was certainly nothing of the kind in sight, and I doubt if the best room was carpeted. Window curtains, too, were tabooed, the lady of the house considering them a superfluity where there were window blinds. The floor of the room in which I took what was called "supper," and in which I passed a couple of hours, was scrupulously clean, but I have seen apartments that were more extravagantly furnished. The furniture consisted of four cane-seated chairs, an extension table, (used also as centre-table,) and a stand-up desk, such as one may see in any counting-room. There was a fire-place in the room and a pair of andirons. On the little shelf above the fire-place were two clocks, neither of them running. There was no other article in the room.

A large part of the farm was on the hillside sloping to the west. There was a level piece of land on the summit, from which a crop of wheat had been taken, and, judging from the stubble, the yield must have been a good one. I passed over this field with Mr. Greeley, and here I noticed the effect of Mr. G.'s peculiar style of locomotion. The harvesters had left a good deal of grain on the ground, and, in passing over it, Mr. G. should have lifted his feet and stepped over it, as I did, but his mind was too much occupied for that, and he dragged his feet along until the accumulation of straw impeded progress, when he would stop and remove a sufficient quantity for a small-sized bundle. Of course his men were slovenly, like their employer, or the field would have been properly raked at the outset. The entire farm had a slipshod look. A little below this field, on a small spot of level ground, stood the famous Greeley barn. It was 40 by 50, made of stone laid up in concrete water-lime. It was four stories in height, and held together by iron rods. The basement was used as a manure cellar, the second floor for stock, and the other stories for hay and grain. It was intended to be a model



barn, but was probably the only one of the kind ever built. It must have cost three or four times as much as the house, and was a far more imposing structure. It appeared to me to be needlessly expensive, and I suspect it was never filled. There was a little stream running down the side hill not far from the house, and I judged from appearances that he had tried to do something at fish-raising, also at irrigation, but the dams that had been erected for these purposes had been abandoned; in fact, it was evident to me that farming was not Mr. Greeley's best hold.

Still, this small farm, mostly side-hill land, and little of it of excellent quality, had a home-like appearance to him, and he doubtless felt at home when he went there. It may have reminded him of the hilly and unproductive lands in New Hampshire and Vermont, on which he had labored before entering the printing office to acquire a knowledge of "the art preservative of arts." I can not be mistaken in saying Mr. Greeley was very much of "a home body;" that is, he loved the family institution, the domestic establishment. He adored his wife and idolized his children; his love for the family was so strong that he excused the vituperative chidings of his wife, and didn't appear to realize that his home was unlike that of most married people. At any rate, he appeared to think that whatever his wife did was exactly right. He always spoke to and of her in the most endearing terms, and seemed anxious to do everything in his power to make her happy. No matter how sharply or bitterly she addressed him, he returned only words of kindness and affection. I have always entertained the opinion that if he had had a wife on whom he could have leaned, one who would have made him a home and a pleasant one, one able to advise with him, who would have greeted him with cheerful words and not with fearful upbraidings, he might have been a very different man from the one of whom I have been writing. He was so

made up that any woman of a large heart and noble impulses, and capable of appreciating his great and estimable qualities, would have exerted a powerful influence over him, and weeded out the worst blemishes in his jagged, eccentric, and somewhat queer make-up. He sadly needed a helpmate all through his life, some one to guide, restrain and assist him—not in his journalistic work, but outside, at the place which most of us call home, where we go when tired and weary and heart-sick, go to seek quiet and repose, and where words of cheer come like angel ministrations.

Mr. Greeley's impulses were all excellent. There was not the least malignity in his nature. He hated wrongdoing with an intense hatred, while he pitied the wrongdoer, and had no desire to see him punished. He was assailed by a congressional bully in Washington, by the name of Rusk, but he did not strike back. I dare say he never struck a human being in his life. He owed no one the least ill-will. His entire being revolted at the infliction of injury or pain.

He was a life-long temperance man, theoretically and practically ; yet this occurrence was related to me as a fact by Bayard Taylor : "I invited him to breakfast with me one morning," said Mr. Taylor, "and had provided myself with a bottle of wine. I told Mr. Greeley that I believed a glass of light wine, drank at breakfast and dinner, not only did me no injury, but was a positive benefit, and asked him if I should not fill a glass for him. He declined respectfully, but firmly, saying he would have nothing but water. He soon emptied his glass, and then reached over and took my bottle of wine, filled his glass from it, drank the contents, replenishing once or twice before the breakfast was finished." Mr. Taylor had the impression that Mr. Greeley was so much occupied in what the two were talking about that he did not know that he was not drinking water. He may have been right.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

The Tribune Staff—Some Characteristics of the Men who Composed it—  
A Recollection of Charles Sumner—Rufus Wilmot Griswold.

Most of the Tribune staff, as made up to the period of which I am writing, have passed off life's stage. Mr. Greeley went in November, 1872, and he has been followed by Mr. Ripley, by Mr. Snow, and by Bayard Taylor. I believe Mr. Fry, one of the brightest men ever upon the Tribune, went in advance. Mr. Pike and Mr. Ottarson dropped out later. Both were capable men in their way; the latter was a Watertown boy, and learned the printing business in the whig paper published here many years ago. Mr. Pike was the Washington correspondent of the Tribune as well as one of the editors. He was likewise one of the proprietors of the concern, an earnest politician and a very strong writer.

Mr. Dana is at the head of the New York Sun, upward of seventy, and I suppose performing more or less literary work. D. C. Henderson is the editor of the Allegan (Mich.) Journal and Tribune, and loves politics as well as he did when he was upon the Tribune, and his desk, filled with political clippings, was in such a chaotic state no one besides himself would have thought of looking thereon for anything of the slightest importance. Mr. Newman, the ship news editor, I think is still living. So also is Mr. Thomas N. Rooker, who assisted in the issue of the first number of the Tribune, and was foreman of the paper so long as Mr. Greeley lived. He was a man of great executive ability, and he did his full share to make the paper the success it has been. He is no longer foreman of the office, but has a position in the

counting room. A glorious old fellow is this same Tom Rooker. I think he acquired a knowledge of the printing business in Albany. He is now about seventy-five, and his naturally jet black hair has become white as wool.

Charles T. Congdon, one of the wittiest as well as one of the most finished writers in America, often charmed readers of the Tribune with some of his productions.

Few of our public men visited New York in those years without calling at the Tribune office. Senators and representatives in congress generally stopped there, and I made the acquaintance of a good many of them, and "took their dimensions," so to speak. I remember meeting Charles Sumner there one morning. He had been in the metropolis to make an anti-slavery speech. He had delivered it at the "old tabernacle," in Broadway, which is remembered only by men well advanced in years, repeated it at Beecher's church in Brooklyn, and afterwards, by special desire, gave it a third time at "Niblo's," then a famous hall uptown, but unknown to the present generation. The speech was an excellent one, and abounded in striking passages. It is unnecessary to say that it was eloquently delivered. Every one who ever listened to Sumner knows that he was one of the finest orators in the world. He had a splendid voice, and his delivery was perfect. He ranked with Edward Everett, Wendell Phillips and that class of orators, who have not been excelled in our age. To show what a charm there was in the matter and manner of this speech of Mr. Sumner, I may mention that a friend of mine, a city merchant, listened to it the evening on which it was first delivered. He followed the speaker to Brooklyn, and afterwards uptown. He told me these things, and added, "The speech grew more and more powerful every time I heard it, and I think if it had been repeated twenty times I should have been present at as many

meetings." I listened to it myself at Beecher's, and about the same time it was printed in the Anti-Slavery Standard, when I read it, and then took in its drift and power even better than when I received it from the lips of its author. The same morning on which Mr. Sumner made his appearance in the Tribune editorial room it had been printed in the daily issue of that paper. Mr. Dana thought printing the speech in the daily paper would be sufficient, and directed that the matter should be distributed. Hearing the order, I said to Mr. Dana: "The idea of the Tribune today appears to be to build up a strong anti-slavery sentiment in this country by exhibiting some of the abhorrent features of the bad institution. I think I should let Sumner's speech go into your weekly, with its circulation of one hundred and forty thousand. It is a telling document. Half the people at the north have read and cried over 'Uncle Tom's cabin,' and their eyes are yet red with the crying; you had better supplement it with Sumner's latest effort."

Mr. Dana said, "Do you really think so?"

I replied, "Certainly I do."

Whereupon he countermanded the order given for "killing" the speech, and directed that it go into the weekly.

An hour later Mr. Sumner came into the editorial rooms, when I ventured to tell him that I had been instrumental in materially increasing the size of the audience that had for the previous few days been giving attention to his speech, stating to him that at my own suggestion it was to go into the Weekly Tribune, where it would be read and pondered upon by hundreds of thousands instead of the limited number who had thus far been able to hear and read it. At first I found it a little difficult to secure his attention at all, and when he finally comprehended the import of my statement he appeared quite indifferent to the matter. His conduct



was a surprise to me ; for, without any personal acquaintance with him, I judged from his speeches and letters that his heart was as full of love for the cause for which he was speaking as were his words. Assuming that he was in earnest in his utterances, I naturally supposed he would be gratified if the entire north could be made acquainted with the contents of a document that had so affected my friend that he could listen to its repetition night after night with increasing enthusiasm for the lofty sentiments advanced as well as with growing admiration for their author. Mr. Sumner, however, did not manifest the slightest feeling on the subject, and appeared to regard its publication as a thing of no account. It is conceded that Charles Sumner was a scholar—for he was a hard student all his life—and a great statesman ; but he was evidently not much of a politician. He was powerfully built and fine looking, but he was cold as an iceberg. He was haughty in his manner, and evidently had a good opinion of Senator Sumner. I have never heard it intimated that Sumner was not a first-class man—I presume he was—but he did not attract me ; and I am not surprised that he and his wife did not agree. I judge that a man with his make-up would be likely to be tyrannical—possibly to such an extent as to be unendurable. Other characters well known throughout the literary and political world were in the habit of dropping into the editorial rooms for half an hour's chat with some one of the men employed there. Among them I remember the Rev. Dr. Rufus Wilmot Griswold, author of "Poets and Poetry in America," and one or two other literary ventures, I believe. I first met him at Dunkirk, on Lake Erie, in 1834. Three or four years afterward he started a weekly journal at Olean, Cattaraugus county. He wrote lots of editorial matter, and did it well. He wrote with great facility. Still, he was no newspaper man. He was too fond of exhibiting himself. He failed at Olean,



and subsequently took holy orders and went into the ministry. I think he did not do a great deal of preaching, but embarked in literature. He was an interesting writer and a charming converser. Those who knew him intimately used to say that he could talk longer with the smallest capital in the way of truth than any man in existence. He would interest a circle of listeners by the hour, as few individuals could, in relating his adventures and experiences, stating where he had been and whom he had met, when his entire story, if inquired into, would prove to be pure fiction. By extensive reading he had made himself familiar, not only with the greater part of the habitable globe, but with its celebrities, and the information thus acquired he would weave into tales in which he would himself manage to play a conspicuous part. He was slenderly built, had dark hair and an easy address. He was a man everybody liked, and he was eagerly listened to, while all were perfectly aware that most of his utterances were magnificent lies.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

Politics in 1854—Kansas and Nebraska—Douglas' Scheme—How Kansas was Made Free.

The year 1854 was one of intense feeling among northern democrats. Large numbers of them had made up their minds that they would not act as slave-catchers for the south. They were willing to let slavery alone, but they did not propose to be used to prop up the institution, and they were especially opposed to its extension. When, therefore, Senator Douglas introduced his bill for the organization of the territory of Kansas, which contained a clause repealing the Missouri compromise, by which slavery was permitted in Missouri, but forever prohibited elsewhere, north of the parallel of  $36^{\circ} 30'$ , there were vast numbers of democrats who disapproved the measure and determined not to give it their countenance. Public meetings were held in various northern cities and towns, and strong resolutions passed in opposition to the bill; but it finally went through congress, though in a modified form. The bill provided for the erection of two territories instead of one, and Douglas' "squatter sovereignty" doctrine, under which the slaveholder could settle in the new territories and take his property with him, upon the same conditions as the non-slaveholder, was made applicable. The bill, as it was finally agreed upon, was intended as a sort of compromise. It was believed that Kansas might become a slave state, and Nebraska a free one. Douglas proposed to be entirely fair. He would open these territories to both slave-owners and haters of slavery, and when they should become settled and desire to come into the Union,

he was for allowing the inhabitants to decide by popular vote whether the state should be a slave state or a free one. He did not himself care whether "slavery was voted up or voted down."

In this shape the matter was left by congress. Then followed a race for Kansas between the inhabitants of the free and the slave states. The former had no notion of letting either of the new territories pass into the hands of the slave power if the thing could be prevented. So they organized emigration societies in Massachusetts and some of the other states and hurried emigrants to Kansas as rapidly as possible. Douglas had said to the northern men, "You do not admit that the southern men are ahead of you in anything, yet you pretend to fear that they can people Kansas faster than you can." The anti-slavery men at the north heard these words, and decided that Kansas should be free. For a couple of years there was a sharp contest; slaveholders went to Kansas in considerable numbers; they were active and determined; but the free people of the north were even more wide-awake; they "squatted" upon the public lands and laid out and built cities. They met with considerable opposition from the slave owners; some blood was spilled; but they ultimately came out ahead, and six years after Kansas and Nebraska were organized as territories, the former was admitted as a free state, and the latter a few years later.

But while this struggle was in progress the democratic party was thoroughly demoralized in all the free states, and very generally overthrown. In Jefferson county an anti-Nebraska mass meeting was held at the court-house in Watertown on the 11th of August, 1854, which was presided over by the Hon. Daniel Wardwell. The meeting was addressed in an able manner by Joseph Sheldon, Esq., of Watertown, now a distinguished lawyer of New Haven, Conn., when a series of strong resolutions against

the Kansas-Nebraska scheme were adopted, and delegates were appointed to a state convention then about to be held at Saratoga. The delegates were, from the first district, J. H. Taft, Stephen Boon, Daniel Wardwell, Hart Massey, William H. Moffett; second district, Joseph Fayel, E. G. Derby, David Granger, A. W. Hardy, D. J. Wager; third district, Beriah Allen, D. J. Schuyler, Dexter Haven, Joseph Osborne, Roswell T. Lee.

The Saratoga convention was largely attended by gentlemen representing all the old political parties, and the following resolutions were adopted :

RESOLVED, That the deliberate repudiation by the slave power, on the very first opportunity, of the solemn compact forced upon our fathers by its representatives, whereby the territories now known as Nebraska and Kansas were consecrated forever to freedom, has absolved us from all compacts or agreements outside of the federal constitution with reference to slavery, and we now take our stand distinctly on the principle that *all territory of the United States must henceforth be free territory, and all states hereafter admitted must come into the Union as free states.*

RESOLVED, That we heartily approve the course of the freemen of Connecticut, Vermont, Iowa, Ohio, Indiana, Wisconsin and Michigan, in postponing or disregarding their minor differences of opinion or preference, and acting together cordially and trustingly in the sacred cause of freedom, of free labor and free soil, and we commend their spirit to the free men of this and other states, exhorting each to maintain old organizations, or supplant them by new, as the cause of liberty and justice shall be best subserved by the one course or the other, and renounce his party whenever and wherever that party proves unfaithful to human freedom.

The convention was adjourned to Syracuse, where the old parties were to hold conventions in September. Governor Seymour was renominated by the regular democracy upon a milk-and-water platform, while the whigs brought forward Myron H. Clark as an anti-Nebraska man. Judge Bronson had been previously nominated by the adamant democracy, and Mr. Ullman was subsequently designated by the know-nothings.

Few were specially delighted with any of the nominees, so a light vote was polled. Great numbers of dem-

ocrats did not go near the election, and half the whigs would as soon have seen Clark defeated as elected. He was, however, chosen.

The reader, however, will observe that the Saratoga convention took preliminary steps looking to the organization of the republican party. Though it did not at once accomplish the end at which it aimed, those who were engaged in it were on hand at Syracuse a year later, and laid broad and secure the foundations of that patriotic and noble organization.

As all are aware who have kept posted in politics, Mr. Seymour was beaten in 1854. His vote was smaller by 107,626 than it was in 1852, and was only 34,213 larger than Ullman's vote. The whigs and know-nothings carried the legislature by an overwhelming majority. In the congressional delegation from this state barely three supporters of the Pierce administration were chosen, and the seat of one of these—John Kelly of New York—was contested by Mike Walsh, a "hard" democrat. So, in fact, there were only two Pierce democrats chosen, Francis E. Spinner from the Herkimer and St. Lawrence district, and John Williams from Monroe. In the delegation there was a large sprinkling of know-nothings. William A. Gilbert of Adams went from this district, Andrew Z. McCarty from the Oswego district, O. B. Mattison from Oneida, Geo. A. Simmons from Essex, Edward Dodd from Washington, Abram Wakeman from New York, Solomon G. Haven from Erie, and Francis S. Edwards from Chautauqua. But one democrat was returned from all New England, and his seat was contested. As a matter of fact, the so-called democracy was "scooped" in the free states.

Jefferson county elected to the assembly in 1854 Calvin Littlefield, Moses Eames and Joshua Main. St. Lawrence elected Asaph Green, Silas Baldwin and Levi Miller. (Mr. Miller has since represented this county in



the assembly.) Oswego returned D. W. C. Littlejohn and Jacob M. Selden. (The seat of the latter was contested by Andrew S. Warner, who succeeded March 8.) Lewis elected Aaron Parsons.

The effort to plant slavery in Kansas was a most desperate one. Judge Reader of Pennsylvania, an upright man and a life-long democrat, was the first governor appointed, but being in favor of fair dealing, he was complained of by the Missourians and other slave-holders, and removed. Then that old democratic war-horse, Wilson Shannon of Ohio, was appointed, but he did not suit the southern men, and was very soon ousted, when John W. Geary was appointed, but he did not fill the bill, and finally the place was given to Robert J. Walker of Mississippi, who, however, was too much of a man to be a party to the diabolical schemes of the border ruffians, and the struggle at last resulted in the triumph of the free state men. A singular fact in connection with this contest is that at least two of the governors, Reader and Geary, became anti-slavery democrats, and, I think, ardent republicans, mainly in consequence of their treatment by the slave propagandists. The two other governors, Shannon and Walker, never pretended to justify the course pursued by the slaveocrats, and were evidently quite willing to see them beaten in the desperate and brutal game they were playing. The Missourians living upon the borders of Kansas did considerable voting at all the elections held in the territory, but there were never at any time a great many *bona fide* settlers from the slave states. It was evident that they were no match for the free north in settling up a new country. .



## CHAPTER XXXIII.

Politics in 1855—Republican Party Organized—Its Platform—It Restores the Republican Party of the Time of Jefferson.

All through the season of 1855 great dissatisfaction was felt and expressed by numerous individuals in both the old political organizations with the way in which they were managed. It was thought by a good many people that freedom ought to have some rights under our boasted free government as well as slavery, and it was insisted that there was a demand for a new party, and the suggestion was made that it be called republican. As early as February 2d a meeting was held in the village of Philadelphia—H. L. Curtiss, chairman, G W. Baker, secretary—for the purpose of forming “a republican party,” and Messrs D. J. Wager, A. W. Danforth, J. F. Lattimer, J. H. Comstock and J. C. Allen were appointed a committee to call future meetings and to effect a political organization. A string of resolutions having the right ring was adopted.

On September 20th a republican county convention was held in Watertown for the purpose of organization and to appoint delegates to a state convention to be held at Syracuse September 26. The delegates appointed were, from the first district, Daniel Wardwell, Joseph Mullin; second district, Gardner Towne, D. J. Wager; third district John Bradley, Beriah Allen.

A party was permanently organized by the appointment of committees. The county committee consisted of James K. Bates, John Sheldon, Jesse Ayer, Leonard Mosher, Joshua Main, M. H. Merwin, and S. D. Sloan.

At the convention held at Syracuse the 26th of September, the republican party was formed in the state of

New York. The elements of the convention consisted of the anti-slavery section of the whig party, which followed the lead of W. H. Seward, those barnburners who affiliated with Preston King, James C. Smith, C. J. Folger, Reuben E. Fenton, James W. Wadsworth and others, and the abolition or free soil party. Each one of these elements met separate and independent, and each organized in its own way. Committees of conference were appointed, and it was resolved then and there they would form the republican party of New York. They met in joint convention in the historic Wieting hall, and Hon. R. E. Fenton was chosen president of this convention. A full state ticket was nominated, Preston King heading it for secretary of state. The know-nothings developed unexpected strength in this campaign; and elected their entire ticket. Joel T. Headley was chosen secretary of state.

The platform which the republican convention adopted, after declaring that there is no power in the federal government for enslaving human beings, against adding to the number of slave states, and condemning the repeal of the Missouri compromise and the policy pursued by Mr. Buchanan, after justifying the emigration to Kansas from the free states, after condemning know-nothingism, and favoring economy in the administration of the affairs of the state, and canal repairs by contract, wound up by adopting and reaffirming the principles set forth in the inaugural address of Thomas Jefferson, as follows:

“Equal and exact justice to ALL MEN;

“The support of the state governments in all their rights as the most competent administrators of our domestic concerns and the surest bulwark against anti-republican tendencies;

“The preservation of the general government in its whole constitutional vigor;

“A jealous care of the right of election by the people, a mild and safe corrective of abuses, which are lopped by the sword of revolution, where peaceable remedies are unprovided;

"Absolute acquiescence in the decision of the MAJORITY, the vital principle of republics, from which there is no appeal but to force—the vital principle and immediate parent of despotism;

"Economy in the public expense, that LABOR may be lightly burdened;

"The honest payment of our debts, and sacred preservation of the public faith;

"Encouragement of agriculture and of commerce as its handmaid;

"The diffusion of information, arraignment of abuses at the bar of public opinion;

"Freedom of religion, freedom of press, and freedom of person, under the protection of the habeas corpus and trial by juries impartially selected.

"These principles form the bright constellation which has gone before us, and guided our steps through an age of revolution and reformation. The wisdom of our sages and the blood of our heroes have been devoted to their attainment; they shall be the creed of our political faith, the text of civic transactions, the touch-stone by which to try the services of those we trust; and should we wander from them in moments of error or alarm, let us hasten to retrace our steps and to regain the road which leads to PEACE, LIBERTY AND SAFETY."

Had I been asked to make a political chart I could not have formed one more to my mind. I had been indoctrinated in the principles of Mr. Jefferson from boyhood, and considered them eminently sound and wise, so there was no difficulty in my being a republican. I did not discover that there was any essential difference between the republicans of 1800 and those of 1855. The democratic party, while professing to revere the inculcations of Mr. Jefferson, appeared to many to have altogether lost sight of them. Jefferson was an anti-slavery man, and the author of the ordinance of 1787, by which slavery was to be forever excluded from the northwest territory. The democratic party in Buchanan's time was thoroughly pro-slavery, and, consenting to the repeal of the Missouri compromise, it was false to the teachings of the great exemplar of the party. So I thought while I called myself a democrat. I was not sorry, therefore, for an opportunity to get out of the party that was untrue to its prototype.

I went out—went out with a hundred thousand, more or less, of as sincere democrats as there were in the state.

We went out as free soil democrats, and united with free soil whigs, such as W. H. Seward and Horace Greeley. I was on the Tribune when the republican party was formed, and wrote the leader, headed "Inauguration of the Republican Party," which appeared in that journal the morning following the formation of the new party. And I have been a republican since that day, and have always intended to be loyal to the principles of the party. I did not become a whig; I was not asked to be a whig, and am not aware that I ever was one; I am sure I never was a federalist; but I was and am a republican, pure and simple.

Those who consider the whigs and republicans identical are mistaken, else I am. I have somehow the impression that they would have conferred upon government a great deal more power than I would. Mr. Jefferson thought the world was governed too much, and so do I. My notion is that anything that can be done by an individual or individuals should be done by them and not by government. In other words, I have more faith in the individual than I have in municipal or other corporations. I believe most thoroughly in home rule; that whatever the individual can do he should do; that whatever can be done in the town, city or county should be done there; that whatever can be done in the state should be done in or by the state.

I think the office of government is to restrain men from injuring one another. It should leave each individual free to manage his own affairs so long as he does not meddle with the rights of others. What those rights are may be easily determined by the golden rule, which enjoins the doing unto others as you would have them do unto you. Those who mean to be governed by that rule want to be let alone. Government can not help them. It can serve them only when they are interfered with by those who refuse to treat them as they would wish to be treated.

I have been, I judge, less of a protectionist than the great body of the whig party. The free soil democrats, as a whole, were opposed to the doctrine of protection ; and had they been asked in 1855 to yield to it their assent in order to establish the republican party, the party would not have been formed. It was an essential plank in the platform of the whig party for twenty years ; but it was wisely dropped from that of the republican party when it was organized, as was another in favor of " prohibition," adopted by the whig convention just previous to its fusion with the free soilers, democrats and abolitionists. The republican party, as organized in 1855, was pretty nearly identical, in its creed and platform, with the republican party of Jefferson's time, and it was no doubt the intention of its framers that this should be so.

But because the modern republican party did not favor the principle of protection, it does not follow that it stood for free trade. A tariff system, under which nearly \$300,000,000 are collected annually from import duties, is a good way from free trade. These duties are solevied as to be protective, and they ought to afford all the protection our industries require. There is almost no complaint with this arrangement ; it is generally satisfactory ; no one proposes to do away with it ; no one proposes to collect the \$300,000,000 in any other way than by the imposition of duties upon foreign imports. So there is no sense in the talk about the tariff of which we hear so much. Demagogues may do it, and doubtless will, in the hope of winning favor from a few men who affect to see great danger to their interests in the agitation of the tariff question ; but until some way can be devised for reducing the public expenditures, the tariff is certain to be high enough to satisfy every rational protectionist ; and as to others, it doesn't matter whether they are satisfied or dissatisfied.



## CHAPTER XXXIV.

Contest for Speaker of House in 1855—Banks Elected—Assault on Greeley and Sumner—The Contest of 1856.

In the mutations of politics some strange things take place. There was one of this character in Watertown in January, 1856. The regular and recognized organ of the old whig party in this county, the Northern New York Journal, was sold out to a company of "know-nothings," and C. Chauncey Burr and his brother Heman became the editors. This was after the organization of the republican party, which took place in the fall of 1855. The why and wherefore of this transaction I have never understood. It is true that the know-nothings were in power in the state; *i. e.*, they had chosen their state ticket at the annual election held in that year, and it was perhaps expected that they would be the dominant party for some years to come. The Seward portion of the whig party had been merged in the republican organization, and I have always supposed that the Journal was Seward-whig in its political proclivities. Whatever the fact may have been, the Journal establishment was sold as above stated, and the republicans were left without an exponent of their sentiments. The result was that the Reformer, which had been started to advocate the cause of temperance, a revision of the modes of making our assessments and some other reform measures, championed the principles of the republican party, while it was nominally independent. However, the know-nothings did not retain possession of the Journal for any great length of time. Probably they did not keep up their payments. At any rate, after a few months the



Journal reverted to its former owners, Clark & Fayel, who made the paper a republican journal. But why was it sold? Why was the young and vigorous republican party left without an advocate at a time when it should have had the support of every man preferring freedom to slavery? Did the conductors of the Journal dream that the republican party was to become the powerful political organization it was in after years? Probably not.

The contest for speaker of the house of representatives, thirty-fourth congress, commencing on the 3d of December, 1855, and closing on the 3d of February following, was a terrific one, and attended with the greatest excitement. The strength of parties in the house at the time congress met was estimated at about 79 administration (Pierce) democrats; 117 anti-Nebraska men, and 37 whigs and know-nothings, with pro-slavery leaning.

The first ballot for speaker showed for William A. Richardson of Illinois, (dem.,) 74; Lewis D. Campbell of Ohio, (anti-Neb.,) 53; Humphrey Marshall of Kentucky, (K. N.,) 30; N. P. Banks of Massachusetts, (anti-Neb.,) 21; Henry M. Fuller of Pennsylvania, (K. N.,) 17; C. M. Pennington of New Jersey, (anti-Neb.,) 7; with 22 votes scattered upon 15 others. Thus the circus opened, and it was continued for two long months, when General Banks of Massachusetts was chosen, having 103 votes to 100 for William Aiken of South Carolina. He was elected under the plurality rule, which the house had adopted as the only way out of its dilemma. On the final ballot 6 votes were given for Fuller, 4 for Campbell and 1 for Wells. Present, but not voting, 3; absent, (mainly paired,) 16; vacancy, 1. The entire delegation from this state voted for Banks, except 3, Kelly and Wheeler of New York, and Williams of Monroe. General Spinner, who up to this date had been classed as a democrat, sustained Banks.

The discomfited democrats in congress were now very bitter, and such of them as represented the slave states were "spoiling for a fight." Albert Rust, a representative in the house from Arkansas, about this time stopped Horace Greeley while on his way from the capitol, and after ascertaining from him that his name was Greeley, dealt him a stunning blow on the side of his head, which sent him staggering against the fence of the walk from the capitol to the avenue. He afterwards approached him with a heavy cane, struck at his head, but Mr. Greeley raised his arm sufficiently to save his head, but received a severe bruise thereon.

On the 22d of May, while Senator Sumner was busy writing in his seat in the senate chamber, he was attacked by Preston Brooks, a representative in congress from South Carolina. The senate had adjourned early on the announcement of the death of Mr. Miller. Brooks approached Sumner with one of his colleagues, each armed with a cane. Several persons had been about Sumner's desk after the adjournment, but at the time chosen for attack he was alone. Brooks walked up in front of Sumner, and told him had read his speech twice, and that it was a libel on South Carolina, and a relative of his, Judge Butler. He then struck Mr. Sumner a violent blow over the head with his cane, while Mr. Sumner sat in his seat unable to extricate himself, cutting by the blow a gash four inches in length on his head. The cane was of gutta percha, an inch in diameter. Brooks followed this blow by others, striking from ten to twenty in all. Sumner was unable to save himself until he had torn his desk from its fastening, when he fell senseless to the floor. An examination of his wounds showed that he was badly injured, having received two severe cuts on the head. His clothes were literally covered with blood when he was removed. Blood was also spattered on the adjoining desks.

While these outrages were being perpetrated at Washington, a terrible contest was in progress in Kansas as to whether the territory should be free or abandoned to slavery. A good many fights took place between the advocates of slavery and the free state men, and considerable blood was spilled.

These occurrences produced the most intense excitement all through the north and west, and probably the south was a good deal stirred up. Everybody in this state was a politician, and highly excited. The republicans especially were thoroughly aroused and in dead earnest. They had no idea of allowing the area of slavery to be extended if they could prevent it; nor did they believe that men ought to be assaulted with intent to maim, if not to kill, while in the discharge of legitimate duties at the national capital by the supporters of slavery. Many who had been willing to let slavery alone, after witnessing its brutal manifestations, became bitterly hostile to it, and insisted upon the right to discuss it as they did other subjects.

In this year (1856) a president was to be chosen. The know-nothings, sometimes called "Americans" and "Hindoos," nominated Millard Fillmore, who was chosen vice president when General Taylor was elected president, and occupied the office after the president's death. The democrats placed in nomination James Buchanan, and the republicans John C. Fremont. There was a lively canvass throughout the northern states. Colonel Fremont carried Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Vermont, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin and Iowa. His plurality in this state was 89,126 over Buchanan. The aggregate vote in all the states stood: For Buchanan, 1,838,169; Fremont, 1,341,264; Fillmore 874,534.

The platform adopted by the republican convention denounced the repeal of the Missouri compromise, the

policy of the Pierce administration, the extension of slavery to free territory, and favored the admission of Kansas as a free state, favored the restoration of the action of the federal government to the principles of Washington and Jefferson, favored the principles set forth in the declaration of independence and embodied in the federal constitution, favored a railroad to the Pacific, and appropriations by congress for the improvement of rivers and harbors of a national character, required for the accommodation and security of our existing commerce. It was silent on the subject of the protection of American industry. The guaranteeing to every individual perfect protection in his person and property was deemed of much greater moment than the imposition of taxes to enable persons to engage in pursuits assumed to be non-remunerative, or to continue their prosecution.

The campaign of 1856, though a triangular fight, was really one-sided; at least, the enthusiasm was all on one side in the free states. The republicans held meetings everywhere, and they were well attended. I was on the stump myself three or four months, and though never much of a speaker, the people were so eager to listen that they came out to hear an indifferent talker. I gave them the naked facts, as I understood them, and I had reason to believe with some effect. Twice in my life I have found addressing political gatherings a pleasant pastime—in 1848, when the battle cry was for “free soil, free speech and free men,” and against Cass, and in 1856, when the contest was for freedom and Fremont.

A daily paper called the “Republican” was issued from the office of the Reformer during the campaign, and I judge it was a spirited publication, but no one happened to think it would be a good plan to keep a file of it; so there is not, so far as I know, a copy of the sheet in existence.

John A. King of Long Island was chosen governor that year, and Samuel L. Selden of Rochester lieutenant—both republicans. I might add that Wesley Bailey, father of E. Prentiss Bailey, of the Utica Observer, was elected state prison inspector, and held the office three years. He was an old-time abolitionist.

Charles B. Hoard was sent to congress from this district, Francis E. Spinner from the St. Lawrence-Herkimer district, and Henry C. Goodwin from the Oswego-Madison district.

The delegation in congress from this state contained the names of several men who became more or less distinguished—Daniel E. Sickles, John Cochrane, Erastus Corning, Edward Dodd, Clark B. Cochrane, Reuben E. Fenton.

Jefferson county sent to the assembly Calvin Littlefield, Cleanthus P. Granger and Abner W. Peck ; St. Lawrence, Emory W. Abbott, Benjamin Squire and Erasmus D. Brooks ; Oswego, D. C. Littlejohn and Leonard Ames ; Lewis, Lucien Clark.

Jefferson county was very pronounced in its republicanism in 1856, as will be seen by the official figures in that year :

Fremont's vote was 8,244 ; Buchanan's 3,426 ; Fillmore's 1,058. Fremont's majority over Buchanan 4,748 ; over both Buchanan and Fillmore 3,760.

The state agricultural fair was held in Watertown in 1856, during two days of incessant rain. The last day was bright, but the grounds were so thoroughly saturated with water that no one could get around without heavy boots or overshoes, so the exhibition was well-nigh a failure.

The fair was held on the grounds through which Keyes avenue now runs, south of Academy and east of Jay street. There were no buildings in that part of the town at that time.



## CHAPTER XXXV.

Financial Troubles in 1857—Some Experiences with Panics and Lessons Therefrom—One Reason for Their Occurrence—Republicans Defeated This Year.

After a storm a calm. The year 1856 was one of intense excitement. Everybody was stirred up, the politicians especially. The next year was a quiet one. There was tribulation in the financial world—in the latter part of the summer a serious panic—and politics for a time went to the rear. As I remember, it started in Wall street, where several bankers and brokers went by the board. Among the men in New York who failed was John Thompson, a well-known broker, who had been an operator in securities for years, and was considered one of the strongest and most reliable men in the city. The suspension of Thompson knocked the underpinning from credit and confidence in business circles, as did the failure of Jay Cooke & Co., in 1873. A great many banking institutions suspended payment, and numerous firms and individuals were forced to do likewise. It was said that the country had overtraded; that more goods had been bought than were needed, more than could be paid for; that there had been too much trusting and too little payment; and this was probably the exact truth.

About so often people find they have reached the end of the credit rope. The aggregate indebtedness causes a greater strain on the frail fabric than it can stand, and so there is a break. A day for settlement comes along. Those who owe the most, and have the least to pay with, are hit first, and stop payment. This



renders it impossible for the men to whom they are indebted to pay, so they, too, stop payment. The failure of one man or firm obliges others to ask time when it does not involve them in financial ruin ; so men who suppose themselves rich today find themselves bankrupt tomorrow. Then they curse their luck, complain of the times, or denounce the government, or one or the other of the political parties. They never attribute the blame to the right cause—to their own want of prudence and foresight. Imagining that credit is a thing that may be expanded indefinitely, if they ever give the matter a thought, they wake up some morning to find that they have been laboring under a serious delusion ; that what they supposed to be a reality is the exact reverse, the emptiest sort of a bubble.

Three times in my day I have seen the business of the country wrecked—in 1837, in 1857 and in 1873. In the year last named the financial troubles were more general than in the other years, but they hardly equalled those of 1837, which were appallingly destructive in localities, wiping out the property of whole communities. The worst thing about it was that the currency in use, consisting mainly of bank paper, was worthless or nearly worthless.

There does not appear to be any remedy for overdoing in the matter of trade and business. Men engaged in commercial, manufacturing and other enterprises find themselves making steady gains, are prone to think that if their business were extended they could make money faster, in other words, get rich quicker. So they branch out. They are seemingly prosperous, and others are induced to try their luck in the same direction. Credit stands by and lends a helping hand. It has one of the characteristics ascribed to the evil one : it coaxes people into difficulty, but is powerless to help them out. It is a good thing when it is well backed, but of no possible

account unsupported by solid cash or its equivalent. But through credit and their own imprudence and want of judgment, men overdo; that is, the more courageous and reckless ones do. Their example is extensively followed; everybody is apparently doing well; business is booming; the country is seemingly enjoying a season of unparalleled prosperity; everything is going ahead with a rush. This is the surface view of the condition of affairs. At length some of the biggest of the concerns find themselves in straitened circumstances; they have borrowed until they can borrow no longer, and they are obliged to suspend. Their suspension compels others to follow suit, until the entire debtor class is involved in a common ruin.

An undue haste to be rich is the grand cause of all our ups and downs in business. If those engaged in commercial employments would be satisfied with reasonable profits, if they would be content with moderate but sure gains, the country as a whole would be in a thrifty condition, and financial panics would be a thing of rare occurrence. However, the evil resulting from overdoing is one that finally corrects itself. The people learn wisdom from experience; or failing to do it, they are compelled to abide the consequences in the form of pecuniary disaster and suffering.

In politics there was no excitement in 1857. The republicans had had such a "walk over" in this state when Fremont was running for president that they little dreamed of being beaten the following year. The greatest effort was made to obtain places on the state ticket, which was expected to take care of itself at the election. But like many political calculations, this failed. The democratic state ticket was chosen by nearly 20,000 majority. It is possible the fact that hundreds and thousands of men found abundant employment in looking after money matters had something to do with

the result of the election ; but it is a historical fact that the republicans were badly defeated. Their state convention was an unusually able one ; it was addressed by Abijah Mann, jr., one of Herkimer's strongest men, by General Nye and others ; an address was reported by David Dudley Field ; the platform was excellent, and the ticket nominated wholly unexceptionable ; still it was beaten. The resolutions started off by appropriating the name of "democratic republican" for the convention and the actors therein. There was no sense in this. It was sufficient that the democrats called themselves "democratic republicans." Republicans should have been satisfied with the name they assumed at the organization of the party. The platform was mainly an anti-slavery document.

Jefferson county did not in 1857 roll up anything like the majority it did the preceding year. Fremont received a vote of 8,244. The head of the republican ticket in 1857, A. M. Clapp of Buffalo received only 5,702, showing a falling off of 2,542. The republican majority in the county was some ten or twelve hundred in the room of being 4,000 or 5,000, as in 1856. Joseph Mullin was chosen justice of the supreme court in this district ; General J. A. Willard of Lewis county was elected state senator ; Abner Baker was chosen sheriff of Jefferson county, and Myron Beebee county treasurer ; George Babbitt, Elihu C. Church and R. F. Austin were elected to the assembly.

St. Lawrence elected Harlow Godard, William Briggs and Oscar F. Shepard ; Oswego, William Baldwin, John J. Wolcott and Chauncey S. Sage ; Lewis, Homer Collins.

Norris M. Woodruff, one of Watertown's most enterprising, energetic citizens, who built and owned the Woodruff house, and was a man of means, died on the 16th of January, 1857, at the age of 64.

The railroad between Watertown and Potsdam was opened the 5th of February, 1857.

William L. Marcy, one of the ablest men we have ever had in the state, as he was one of the most incorruptible, was found dead in his room at Ballston, Saratoga county, at noon, July 4, 1857. Mr. Marcy was governor of New York three terms, secretary of war under Polk, and secretary of state under Pierce, discharging the duties of these different positions with uncommon ability.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

Occurrences in 1858—Scrimmage between Speaker Grow and Keitt of S. C. in Congress—Death of Thomas H. Benton—Atlantic Telegraph Laid—Notice of William Everett—Death of William Smith—Republican State Convention—Results of Fall Elections.

On the 6th February, 1858, the national house of representatives was thrown into most violent excitement, and a fearful scene of confusion took place.

Hon. Galusha A. Grow of Pennsylvania was walking down the aisle on the democratic side of the hall, when Mr. Keitt, of South Carolina, and a boon companion, approached him. A squabble took place between Grow and Keitt. The latter struck the former, when the parties were separated by friends. Some words were then exchanged between the two men, when Keitt again dealt a blow at Grow, who thereupon drew back and knocked the pugnacious South Carolinian flat upon the floor. Friends then interfered, and order was restored. Hon. H. B. Stanton, in his "Random Recollections," states that scenes often occurred in the house both dramatic and perilous. He was himself present when the affair above related took place, and says it came near involving the members and perhaps the galleries in bloodshed. But for the caution and firmness of Speaker Orr there is no guessing what might have happened. "At a later day," continues Mr. Stanton, "Owen Lovejoy of Illinois, brother of the Alton martyr, while delivering a speech, unconsciously advanced step by step across the aisle in front of the clerk's desk. A southern member laid his hand on Lovejoy's shoulder, saying: 'Go back

to your own side.' Instantly the area was full of members, the most of whom were armed. The ominous 'click' of weapons was heard. Washburne of Illinois clutched at the supposed hair of Barksdale of Mississippi, and pulled off his wig. High above the din rose the voice of Kellogg of Illinois, shouting: 'My colleague shall be heard!' The crowd swayed to and fro, the mace of the little sergeant-at-arms dancing about on the surface till it was thrown clear out of the vortex, recalling the scene in Westminster hall when Cromwell, who had entered to expel the Rump Parliament, was confronted with the mace, and cried: 'Take away that bauble!' The frightened speaker rapped, rapped, rapped, shouted 'Order, order, order!' and the storm finally subsided."

Thomas H. Benton died in Washington April 10, 1858, aged 76. He acquired the sobriquet of "Old Bullion" on account of his persistent advocacy of a gold and silver currency. He was a profound student and a strong man. He was in the United States senate when there was a great amount of talent in that body, and he ranked among the ablest members. In one respect I think he stood at the head. I never heard of his wanting to be president. A good many of the others did desire the office, and the fact rendered them to a greater or less extent demagogues.

The Atlantic telegraph cable was successfully laid August 5, 1858; that is, the project was so far successful that messages were exchanged between the president of the United States and Victoria, and communication was maintained between the two continents for a few days, when the line gave out, and there was no further telegraphic intercourse between America and England for eight years, or until 1866. The subject of laying a cable was agitated as early as 1853, a company was organized, a cable made, and some time later it was lowered into the ocean; but, as I remember, it failed to operate after a



single message had been transmitted. A Watertown boy, William Everett, was the engineer of the steamer from which the largest portion, if not the whole, of *that* cable was paid out. Everett made it his home in Oswego, where his mother resided, and to whom he was greatly devoted. As I remember Everett's history, he strayed from home when a mere lad, brought up in Philadelphia, and there went to work in a gunsmith shop. When Polk was inaugurated as president Governor Marcy was made secretary of war. I think Everett was in Washington at the time. Governor Marcy having taken possession of his office, there were lots of people calling upon him to pay their respects, and to see if he could find something for them to do. Among other callers was young Everett, who was still in his teens, and was therefore able to push his way through the throng better than some older people. He managed to get so well to the front that the ex-governor got his eye upon him. He was a bright looking fellow, with sharp, black eyes. Said the governor :

“ My young friend, what do you want here ? ”

Everett went straight up to the war minister, and told him he wanted a place in the navy yard. After a brief conversation, from which the ex-governor learned who he was and where from, he gave the young man a note to the proper officer at the navy yard, which was duly delivered. The result was, Everett was set at work, and proved to be “ the right man in the right place.” He rose rapidly in the profession of engineer, and when a new war ship was fitted out for service a year or two afterward, Mr. Everett superintended the work, and, I think, was the engineer of the vessel ; and when the first Atlantic cable was laid, he planned the machinery for performing the work. What finally became of him I do not know, but I have the impression he closed his labors upon earth several years ago.

William Smith, one of the early settlers of Watertown, and one of its soundest, most intelligent and most useful citizens, died Nov. 24, 1858, at the age of 82. He was the father of George Smith, treasurer of the Jefferson County Savings bank, and was born in New Haven, Conn.

The republican state convention in 1858 nominated E. D. Morgan for governor, and Robert Campbell of Steuben county for lieutenant governor. Mr. Morgan had been a well-known whig in New York previous to the organization of the republican party, had served two terms in the state senate and one in the national house of representatives, and Mr. Campbell had been a leading democrat in the southern tier of counties, occupying about the same position there as did Preston King in northern New York.

The platform embodied the accepted doctrines of the republican party ; also a resolution taking strong ground in favor of a registry law.

Charles B. Hoard was re-elected to congress from this district, Francis E. Spinner from the St. Lawrence-Herkimer district, and M. Lindley Lee was elected in the Oswego-Madison district. Roscoe Conkling was chosen to the house of representatives for the first time from Oneida county. Charles H. Van Wyck, the present U. S. senator from Nebraska, went into the house from Orange county. E. G. Spaulding was there from Buffalo, R. E. Fenton from Chautauqua, Edwin R. Reynolds, who set type with Horace Greeley over in Poultney, Vt., when both were boys, was there from the Orleans district, Charles B. Sedgwick was there from Onondaga county, Abram B. Olin was there from the Rensselaer district, likewise John and Clark B. Cochrane, with others I might name, rendering the delegation from New York in the thirty-sixth congress one of uncommon ability.

To the assembly, Jefferson county in 1858 elected Russell Weaver, Patrick S. Stewart and Furman Fish. St. Lawrence elected Harlow Godard, William Briggs and Oscar F. Shepard; Oswego, DeWitt C. Littlejohn, James J. Coit and Beman Brockway; Lewis, Lyman R. Lyon. In the same year, Russel B. Biddlecom was chosen county clerk of Jefferson county, and James A. Bell one of the coroners.

And this is how I came to go to the legislature: In the latter part of September 1858, Colonel S. M. Tucker, a republican politician in Oswego county, called on me, and surprised me by the statement that it was proposed by himself and friends to nominate me for the assembly. I replied that that was a matter for himself and friends to settle; that should I be nominated and elected I knew of no good reason why I could not serve; and that I should leave the business entirely in his hands. It turned out that there was a general sentiment in favor of making me the nominee, so I was designated and chosen by the usual majority, 900 or 1,000.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

The Legislature of 1859—Some of the Men in It—Speaker Littlejohn—  
Strife for Position on the Committees.

The legislature of 1859 was overwhelmingly republican. The senate stood 20 republicans and Americans to 12 democrats; the assembly 99 republicans and know-nothings to 29 democrats. The know-nothings at this time had ceased to be of any special account, and the few in the legislature generally acted with the republicans.

I judge the legislature of that year was exceptionably able. There were in the senate such men as William A. Wheeler, afterwards vice-president of the United States; Samuel Sloan, then president of the Hudson River railroad, now president of the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western; Richard Schell, a distinguished financier and politician in New York; Alexander S. Diven, a leading lawyer and railroad man in Elmira; E. S. Prosser, one of Buffalo's soundest business men; Lyman Truman, a banker and lumberman of Owego; James Noxon, afterwards justice of the supreme court in this district; A. H. Latlin, who subsequently represented the Jefferson-Herkimer district several terms in congress; Dr. Benjamin Brandreth, the manufacturer of Brandreth's pills, which cured almost every disease with which humanity was afflicted thirty or forty years ago; John C. Mather, ex-canal commissioner, who spent the latter years of his life in Watertown, and died here; Frank Spinola, the well-known New York politician, who had an equal liking for democracy and whisky.

In the assembly there were several gentlemen who have achieved considerable reputation. Among them I recall

the names of General H. W. Slocum, who represented the second district of Onondaga county ; Burt Van Horn, afterwards representative in congress from Niagara county ; Charles S. Spencer, a leading republican politician in New York ; Frederick A. Conkling, brother of Roscoe, then a republican, but now a democrat, of New York ; John W. Chanler, afterwards a congressman from New York ; George Opdyke, the well-known financier, and afterwards mayor of New York ; George S. Batcheller, who has been a judge in Egypt for many years, and was a few years ago returned to the assembly, after an interval of twenty-seven years ; he has since been an assistant secretary of the treasury ; Samuel L. Fuller, a leading banker in Grand Rapids, Mich. ; Thomas Coleman, a level-headed banker of Troy ; James Mackin, then a republican, but later a democrat and state treasurer ; Dewitt C. Littlejohn of Oswego, who was chosen speaker that year for the third time ; Daniel Morris, who afterwards went to congress from the Yates district ; and many others I might name if my list were not already sufficiently extended.

I gave myself no trouble as to the arrangement of the assembly committees. The speaker knew me, as I did him, and I left him at liberty to assign me such position as he should consider me fitted for, or to leave me off from any committee if he cared to. And here I desire to say that I cannot understand why it is that persons chosen to the legislature go into spasms over the question of what committee they shall be on, or the place they shall have upon it. The truth is, if a man has any ability or qualifications for a seat in a legislative body, the fact will crop out sooner or later, and he is pretty sure to have all the influence to which he is entitled. Men find their level there as they do in the neighborhood in which they reside. Sound, level-headed men are pretty certain to have followers. There will be those



who respect their judgment and will be inclined to heed their counsel and act with them. This is my observation. It appears to me, therefore, that only small men will worry as to what disposition shall be made of them by the speaker. Men like William H. Seward, J. A. Garfield and Roscoe Conkling would be apt to make themselves felt in a legislative assembly, even though the presiding officer were to ignore them altogether. I have known men to be placed at the head of committees who had no influence with their associates, and little elsewhere. In such cases a mistake is perpetrated both by the appointing power and by the person accepting the position tendered. When a man takes a place for which he has no qualifications he makes a sad blunder. He exposes his lack of capacity, and does little credit to himself or the position he occupies. It is a weak specimen of humanity that does not know that position never raised one in the estimation of his fellow-men. Some persons confer dignity and honor on the stations in which they may be placed ; but rarely has any position, however elevated, added to the intellectual stature of a weak man.

The experience acquired during that winter was valuable. I appreciate the difficulties and embarrassments under which the well-intentioned legislator labors. He cannot always have things as he would. There is too much contrariety of opinion, too many conflicting interests. With Romans you will have to do as Romans do, or be set down as an off-ox or a crank. There are 128 men in the state assembly, every one of whom has his peculiarities and caprices. These are to be respected ; at least, it is not safe to ignore them. One must do the best he can in view of his surroundings. Considering the heterogeneous materials of which most legislatures are composed, it is really a marvel that so little mischief is done.



## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

The Late Horatio Seymour—The Characteristic Features, Virtues and Lessons of His Life—Recollections of the Writer.

I first met Horatio Seymour to know who he was, at the democratic state convention in Syracuse in 1847. He was then 37 years of age, an old hunker, and being a fluent speaker, he was impressed into the service of and did a good deal of talking for the branch of the party with which he affiliated. James T. Brady of New York and Mr. Seymour were the leading advocates of the hunker faction. They were no match for the speakers on the other side, George Rathbun, James C. Smith, Martin Grover, E. G. Lapham, James R. Doolittle, John Van Buren and George P. Barker, but they acquitted themselves creditably, and perhaps I should have appreciated their efforts more fully had I been in sympathy with them. The truth, I suspect, was that the barnburners had the best speaking talent in the convention and the hunkers the best political managers. There were clever politicians among the latter, as sharp as the country has ever known, but they did not excel as speakers. John Stryker of Rome was one of the shrewdest operators in the state, and a very good lawyer, I believe, but he could never make a speech. And the same thing might be said of several other well-known hunkers who occupied seats in the convention. So Mr. Seymour acted a conspicuous part in this once famous gathering.

I don't think Mr. Seymour excelled as a speech-maker. He lacked enthusiasm. I never saw him excited. He made a good impression, for his words were

well chosen and his manners easy and agreeable. While he had very decided convictions, there was little of the aggressive in his composition. He was naturally a conservative, and believed in letting well enough alone. So he was not a radical in anything. He naturally belonged to the Episcopal church. It was in consonance with his tastes. He was not a progressive either in religion or politics. He was something the style of man as General Dix, but less impulsive. The latter sometimes expressed himself in very emphatic terms and with great positiveness. Governor Seymour would never have given the order for shooting "on the spot" persons that should presume to haul down the American flag. He would have employed other and more moderate language. Governor Seymour did not like to offend; never became impatient. General Dix sometimes "slopped over," spoke rashly, and acted in the same way. Governor Seymour told me that the factions in the city of New York gave him infinite trouble, and that the only way he could get along with them with any degree of satisfaction was to have them all offended with him.

He was the intimate and confidential friend of Governor Marcy, who was one of the pillars of the Albany regency. That organization had a way of picking up bright and promising young democrats, and utilizing them in the work of strengthening the cause in which they were engaged. General Dix was taken up for the reason named. He was a good writer and a very estimable man. Neither Dix nor Seymour was what would be called a strong man. They were amiable, gentlemanly, high-toned and trustworthy rather than great. They were popular leaders because they were careful not to antagonize themselves to any considerable number of people if they could avoid it.

While the governor was in political life he resided in the old mansion at Utica, which formerly belonged to his

father, Henry Seymour, and which, for a good many years, has been occupied by his brother, the late John F. Seymour.

When he retired from politics it was to an estate of five hundred acres in the town of Deerfield, three miles from Utica, on the north side of the Mohawk. This piece of land was divided into eight farms. Originally it was a part of the Crosby manor, and was purchased many years since by John Bleeker of Albany, the father of Mrs. Seymour.

The place was somewhat desolate when the governor went there. The house was small, and void of modern comforts, but it has been extended and beautified, and is at present a charming abode, although decidedly unpretentious. The whole estate is on the uplands, which slope gently toward the Mohawk valley. The Utica & Black River railroad, as it enters Utica, must pass very near the farm.

I spent an evening at the governor's residence in the fall of 1869 with a party of gentlemen from Utica. It is needless to say we were delightfully entertained. The governor was a charming converser. He was thoroughly informed on most subjects, and was, therefore, highly interesting.

The governor was an enthusiast on the subject of simplicity of style and the employment of short words. He thought words of one syllable the most expressive, and was wholly averse to the use of adjectives. These belonged to a by-gone age.

Like Daniel Webster and Silas Wright, the governor had a fondness for pastoral pursuits. He liked to see fine farms, well cultivated. It delighted him to look at good crops, to see fine stock. He delivered a great many agricultural addresses in his day.

Governor Seymour was always and everywhere a gentleman, affable, courteous, dignified. His neighbors and

fellow townsmen had great respect for him, for he sympathized with them. One who has known him for nearly half a century states that "for thirty years he was, more than any other individual, the leader of his party in the state and nation, and all the while he moved in and out of Utica as the simplest of its citizens, the least ostentatious among his neighbors, the most courteous and most sympathetic of friends."

He believed in the democratic party, as he did in the doctrines of his church, because he was reared in those organizations, and was so much of a conservative that he did not care to inquire whether there were better Christians than those in the church to which he was attached, or truer friends of the country and the public interest in other parties than in the one of which he was a life-long member.

Governor Seymour was one of those men who imparted character to office, and who made the holding of positions of public trust honorable. These positions are degraded when held by the incompetent and dishonest, and so they should be bestowed only upon those of unquestioned probity and uprightness.

Much is said in our day respecting self-made men—those who succeed in spite of adverse circumstances, who pay their own way, educate themselves, and fight their way to distinction without adventitious help. Governor Seymour was not of this class. His father was in easy if not in affluent circumstances, and able to give his son a good education, and did it. Horatio Seymour never knew anything of want. And still that fact did not effect his ruin, as it has that of many others. He improved his advantages. He was a manly boy, and the excellent traits that distinguished him in youth adhered to him all through life. He felt that every man

was his peer, and that he was the peer of every man. He had a great heart, one full of charity, and he delighted in performing acts of kindness, in making others happy.

The governor somehow distrusted the New England states—perhaps he remembered the Hartford convention and what was said of it in his early days—and in his later years he is reported to have said that “the north and the south are drawing closer together in sentiment and feeling through the exchange of products and the frequency of travel. There is more danger that the east and west may not agree so well. The tariff question is to be a serious one. For instance, a yard of cloth which costs fifty cents to import at the sea coast, as it passes from hand to hand increases to \$2 in the west.” The governor forgot for the moment that the west is the child of the east, and that there is little likelihood that the latter will become a parricide. The west has a natural affection for the east, as the east has for the west. No doubt the notions of the east that its industries must have help from the general government in order to live and prosper are erroneous, but the two sections will talk the matter over some day, and very likely come to the sensible conclusion that it is no part of the duty of government to help anybody ; that each individual must depend upon himself and every interest upon itself. It seems to me there is danger in the policy of protection, for the reason that it is impossible to afford equal aid to all sections and interests ; some parties will obtain more than a fair share, especially as the favored by government are benefited at the expense of the unprotected. Of course, this should not be, and will not be when men get through soliciting favors for themselves that they are not willing all should enjoy.



## CHAPTER XXXIX.

William A. Wheeler—His Talents and Worth—Wheeler, Stanton and Lincoln—General Slocum—Mayor Opdyke and Others.

I made the acquaintance of William A. Wheeler, and learned to esteem him for his high character, sterling integrity and great moral worth, in the winter of 1859, when he was in the senate and I was in the lower house. I afterwards saw a good deal of him in the last constitutional convention, of which he was president; also as a representative in congress and vice-president of the United States. He was in only passable health for a great many years. We boarded at the same house in Albany when he was in the constitutional convention, and he would often tell me in the morning that he had not had an hour's good sleep during the night. He could not sleep; consequently he was always weary. He felt best when he was "roughing it," hunting and fishing in the north woods. His ill-health impaired his usefulness. It incapacitated him for continuous effort. It enfeebled his ambition.

Yet Mr. Wheeler was a splendid man. He was a stronger man than Hayes when the latter occupied the president's office, yet Mr. Hayes was a very good chief magistrate, and his administration a highly successful one.

When the delegates to the constitutional convention assembled in Albany Mr. Wheeler's name was spoken of for president of that body, and he was approached by some of the delegates, who desired assurances from him, in case he was chosen, that the committees should be made up thus and so. To all applicants Mr. Wheeler



returned the uniform answer, "If chosen, I shall make up the committees according to my best judgment. Those who are afraid to trust me should not support me. I can make no pledges."

When Oakes Ames was distributing credit mobilier stock among members of congress, he called upon Mr. Wheeler. The latter inquired of Mr. Ames:

"Are you making your distribution of stock general among the members of congress?"

Mr. Ames confessed that he was not; that he was bestowing it upon the most influential, putting it "where it would do the most good."

Mr. Wheeler then said: "You will have to excuse me, Mr. Ames; I cannot consent to take any of the stock; the fact of my holding it might embarrass me at some future time; I prefer to keep my hands clean and free."

As all remember, what was called the "salary grab" was smuggled through congress. Members of that body increased their own pay, putting into their pockets several thousand dollars in the form of arrearages. There were gentlemen who considered the whole thing wrong, and the inquiry arose among them, "What shall we do with the plunder?" Mr. Wheeler asked no questions, but promptly covered the funds into the treasury. He knew what to do with them so far as he was concerned. They belonged to the government, and he meant the government should have the portion that had been voted to him, at any rate.

This shows the type of man William A. Wheeler was. He was one of the noblest men in the state. He was thoroughly equipped for any office within the popular gift. He made an excellent legislator, and was a capital presiding officer; he was clear-headed, prudent, safe. He was thoroughly honest. He loathed the tricks of the ordinary politician. He was one of those men who could say "no" without giving offense, and he did not

hesitate to do it when he felt that it should be said, and the person to whom it was addressed did not take umbrage, for he realized that Mr. Wheeler was right.

Mr. Wheeler passed the closing days of his useful life at his pleasant residence in Malone—not precisely alone, for he had a houskeeper and I believe a physician residing with him.

Mr. Wheeler was in congress at the breaking out of the late war, knew President Lincoln intimately, as well as his secretary of war, Mr. Stanton ; and related to the Malone Palladium this incident to illustrate Mr. Lincoln's ingrained honesty and tenacity in the observance of his promises : "At its extra session in July, 1861," says Mr. Wheeler, "congress had passed a law authorizing the appointment of additional paymasters in the army. Before leaving Washington for home I asked Mr. Lincoln that I might name one of these. He promptly assented, and directed his private secretary to make a memorandum of it. I desired the place for my old boyhood and lifelong friend, Major John A. Sabin. Some time in the following September I received a letter from the president, saying he had sent the appointment of Mr. Sabin to the secretary of war, who would notify him to appear for muster into the United States service. October had passed and no notice came. A letter written to Secretary Stanton failed to bring a response. In the latter part of November I went to Washington to attend the regular session of congress, taking Mr. Sabin with me. The day after my arrival I waited upon Secretary Stanton, and called his attention to the appointment. He had no recollection of the matter, but told me, in his brusque manner, that Mr. Sabin's name would be sent in, with hundreds of others, to the senate for its consideration. Earnestly I argued that Mr. Sabin had been appointed by the commander-in-chief of the army, and that it was unjust to ask him to wait, perhaps the whole winter, the

tardy action of the senate upon his nomination, and that he was entitled to be mustered in at once. But all in vain. I got but this reply from the iron secretary: 'You have my answer; no argument.'

"I went to the chief clerk of the department, and asked him for Mr. Lincoln's letter directing the appointment. Receiving it, I proceeded to the white-house, although it was after executive hours. I can see Mr. Lincoln now as when I entered the room. He wore a long calico dressing-gown reaching to his heels, his feet were incased in a pair of old-fashioned leathern slippers, such as we used to find in the old-time country hotels, and which had evidently seen much service in Springfield. Above these appeared the hand-made blue woolen stockings which he wore at all seasons of the year. He was sitting in a splint rocking chair, with his legs elevated and stretched across his office table. He greeted me warmly. Apologizing for my intrusion at that unofficial hour, I told him I had called simply to ascertain which was the paramount power in the government, he or the secretary of war. Letting down his legs and straightening himself up in his chair, he answered: 'Well, it is generally supposed (emphasizing the last word) I am. What's the matter?' I then briefly recalled the facts attending Sabin's appointment, when, without a word of comment, he said: 'Give me my letter.' Then, taking his pen, he indorsed upon it:

"'Let the within named J. A. Sabin be mustered in at once. It is due to him and to Mr. W. under the circumstances.

A. LINCOLN.'

"He underscored with double lines the words 'at once.'

"Armed with this executive mandate, I called on Mr. Stanton the next morning, who, on its presentation, was simply furious. He charged me with interfering with

his prerogative and with undue persistence—perhaps as to the last not without some force, for I had wearied with the delay and was a little provoked by what I regarded as the ‘insolence of office.’ I told him I would call the next morning for the order to muster in. I called accordingly, and, handing it to me in a rage, he said: ‘I hope I shall never hear of this matter again.’ On the evening of this day I attended a reception given by Speaker Grow. Stanton was there, and crossed the room to shake hands with me, but made no reference to the occurrence of the morning. From that time he and myself were friends. I never asked anything of him that he refused. A feeble imitation of his own persistence won his regard.”

In the assembly I met General Slocum for the first time. He was an impulsive creature, and so sometimes got off the track; but his intuitions were always right. He was a republican then, and a republican when he went to the war. When and how he became a democrat I never knew. I thought very highly of him while I was intimate with him, and do yet. I know there are few truer men than Henry W. Slocum. He hates all sorts of crookedness and meanness with an intensity which is indescribable, and he is quite as earnest in his devotion to what he believes is just and right. There was no man in the legislature that I knew better than Slocum, and I had a great liking for him.

Thomas Coleman and Anson Bingham, both of Rensselaer, were capable men and excellent legislators. The former is still in business in Troy—at the age of 86, I judge—but whether Bingham is still living, I do not know.

Major Charles M. Scholefield represented the first district of Oneida county, a very bright man, with much native shrewdness; knew the rules of the house as well as he did the alphabet, and the assembly atmosphere

was uncommonly hazy when he got "left." He died several years since.

Two excellent republicans and first-class men represented Niagara county, Burt Van Horn and James Sweeney. The latter, if I remember right, was the youngest man in the house, as he was one of the most popular and best.

There were several strong men from New York, among them George Opdyke, afterwards mayor. He was a prosperous merchant and a successful business man, and attended to legislation exactly as he did to his own private affairs. He was one of the most vigilant men in the assembly. Charles S. Spencer did any amount of talking, and often to little purpose, but socially he was well thought of. His wines were liked better than his speeches. F. A. Conklin represented the seventh district of New York, and was a strong republican. Just when he went over to the democracy and the reasons which influenced the change I do not know. He did a good deal of talking, often with a volume under each arm, while he read from a third ; but there was this to be said of him : He never talked without saying anything. He was a dry, uninteresting speaker, but there was argument and good sense in what he was saying, though few ever took the trouble to listen to him. He was thought to regard himself as one of the purest and cleanest men in the legislature. A year or two afterwards he was chosen to congress. Meeting him in Albany soon after his election, I tendered to him my congratulations. He appeared to be in doubt whether he ought to accept them. "It is true," said he, "that I have been chosen, but my—you have no idea what my election cost me !" Mr. Conkling was understood to have plenty of money, having married eligibly, and probably the political suckers bled him unmercifully. Christian B. Woodruff and John W. Chanler were there from the city, both leading



democrats, devoted to the interests of New York, and likely men.

St. Lawrence had, as usual, a delegation consisting of sound rather than brilliant men, which was headed by Harlow Godard, the Richville banker.

A very capable and excellent man was William A. Young of the city of Albany. He was elected as an independent democrat, in opposition to a democrat of the Buchanan stripe. He was an independent legislator; voted as a sense of duty prompted every time. He always had a reason for the faith that was in him, and he was governed by it. Looking over a list of the men with whom I was on terms of intimacy several months in 1859, I notice that the "grim messenger" has made great inroads among them. Probably half have joined the procession which is moving to the spirit world. At no distant day there will be nothing left of any of them save the unimportant records they have made while sojourning in this rudimental life.



## CHAPTER XL.

Other Occurrences in 1859—Death of Alvin Hunt and Other Leading Citizens—Burning of Watertown Woolen Mills—Republican State Convention—Senator Broderick Killed—The John Brown Raid and the Result—The “Irrepressible Conflict.”

The year 1859 was upon the whole an uneventful one. The Reformer, on the 24th of February, contained an editorial in which occurred this remark : “If the republic survives the administration of James Buchanan, it will furnish additional evidence of the strength and enduring nature of a free government.” The republic *did* survive the administration of Mr. Buchanan, and I am pretty well convinced that it is not in the power of any chief magistrate, however weak or wicked he may be, to overthrow the government. So long as the people are loyal to the principles on which our institutions are based, the republic is safe.

In February Oregon was admitted as a state, making the number of states in the Union thirty-three.

In the same month Alvin Hunt, for a quarter of a century the leading editor in Watertown, and a strong democratic partisan, departed this life. He was a native of Lebanon, Conn., where he was born on the 6th of June, 1794. He was not a practical printer, though in early life he desired to acquire a knowledge of the business. He worked in a factory both before and after he came to this county. He learned the trade of dyeing and scouring. His educational advantages were exceedingly limited ; yet he somehow learned to write, and in a clear, strong and forcible manner. While working in a factory he wrote articles for the old Watertown Freeman, which attracted the attention of Judge Keyes, and when John

Calhoun, in September, 1832, started the Watertown Eagle, Mr. Hunt furnished articles for it, and in March, 1833, he became associate editor, and five months later sole editor. He started the first daily in Watertown, but it did not last long. The different papers under his charge, the Eagle, the Eagle and Standard, Jeffersonian and Jefferson County Union, wielded great influence, and had much to do with making Jefferson the strong democratic county it was previous to the organization of the republican party. Mr. Hunt is spoken of as an upright, conscientious man and a good citizen.

The deaths of other leading citizens of the county occurred during the year ; among them are the names of Gordon P. Spencer, Calvin Skinner, Noadiah Hubbard and Theophilus Rogers.

General Daniel E. Sickles was tried in April, at Washington, for killing Philip Barton Key, the seducer of his wife, and acquitted. Sickles and his wife afterwards lived together several years, and until the death of the latter. The Watertown woolen mills, at the upper end of the town, were burned in May, and several persons lost their lives in jumping from the burning building.

The republican state convention, held Sept. 7, which was presided over by William A. Wheeler, who made a ringing speech on taking the chair, nominated Elias W. Leavenworth for secretary of state ; Robert Denison for comptroller ; Charles G. Myers for attorney general ; Orville W. Story for state engineer ; Philip Dorsheimer, father of the late editor of the New York Star, for treasurer ; Ogden N. Chapin for canal commissioner ; David P. Forrest for state prison inspector, and Charles Hughes for clerk of the court of appeals. The same year Leroy Morgan was nominated for justice of the supreme court in this district, and Henry E. Davies for judge of the court of appeals. If I remember right, all these nominees were chosen.

The same fall James A. Bell was chosen to the state senate from the Jefferson district, Charles C. Montgomery from the St. Lawrence district, and Andrew S. Warner from the Oswego district.

Jefferson county elected to the assembly Bernard D. Searles, William W. Taggart and Moses C. Jewett; St. Lawrence, Charles Richardson, Edwin A. Merritt and Clark S. Chittenden; Oswego, D. C. Littlejohn, William H. Carter and Robert S. Kelsey; Lewis, Richard T. Hough.

The legislature of 1860 broke up with a shocking reputation. The general impression was that there was a great deal of money used among the members. Several of the New York street railroads were chartered in that year, and it is not unlikely that considerable amounts of stock and other valuables were distributed. A gentleman occupying a position in the clerk's desk stated to the writer that a member from one of the back counties approached him one day, saying he had been offered \$500 if he would vote for a certain bill. It was one in which his constituents were not at all interested, he said, and he was out of pocket for election expenses about the amount named. He wished the advice of the assistant clerk as to what he should do in the premises.

"Well, what answer did you make to the gentleman?" I inquired.

"What in——do you suppose I told him?"

Leaving me to understand that he advised the acceptance of the bribe.

It was in the latter part of the summer of 1859 that David C. Broderick, U. S. senator from California, was killed in a duel near San Francisco, by a supporter of the national administration. Broderick believed he was killed because he had the "courage of his convictions" and dared to express his sentiments. It is stated that his last words were: "They have killed me because

I was opposed to the extension of slavery and a corrupt administration." He was a man of great natural ability, but without culture. I think he was a stone-cutter in New York, but he had great influence with the laboring men in that city.

It was in this same year that John Brown, appearing to think that he could free the slaves of Virginia, and perhaps of the entire south, by erecting the standard of freedom south of Mason and Dixon's line, and inviting the slaves to rally under it, undertook the work, but he was unable to make a beginning even. True, he captured the U. S. arsenal at Harper's Ferry, took refuge in it, and was captured there. Two of his sons who were with him were killed, or so seriously wounded that they lived only a short time. Brown himself was badly wounded, but he was taken prisoner and committed to jail, and afterward tried for treason and for inciting the slaves to insurrection, found guilty, and hanged at Charlestown, Va., Dec. 2, 1859. Brown was born at Torrington, Ct., May 9, 1800, and was fifth in descent from Peter Brown, who landed at Plymouth, Mass., from the Mayflower in 1620. His father removed to Ohio at an early day, and the son passed most of his days in that state. He was a brave, well-meaning man, but wholly impracticable.

It was likewise in this same year that Mr. Seward delivered a speech in Rochester in which he spoke of the "irrepressible conflict" between freedom and slavery. It must have been obvious, I should say, to most people who were not stone blind that there was at the time a serious conflict near by, if not already present, the result of which no one could foretell. The southern leaders were becoming desperate. They had secured the enactment of a law by the federal government requiring the north to assist in the capture of runaway slaves, but it was substantially a dead letter. They had procured the

repeal of the Missouri compromise for the purpose of opening the territories of the United States to settlement from the slave states as well as from the free, but it was plain that the latter were too strong for them, and that Kansas and Nebraska were destined to be free states. The southern heart was intensely "fired," and it was evident that if it did not cool down there was trouble ahead, that a "conflict" had already arisen between the two sections of the country, and that it must go on until one of them backed down, or was compelled to submit at the cannon's mouth.

## CHAPTER XLI.

Occurrences in 1860—Railroad Travel Then and Now—A Long Contest for Speaker—Pennington Chosen—A Speech by a Drunken Senator—Death of Macauley—Nominations for President.

The Jefferson county court-house, on Arsenal street, was erected this year. To make room for it, the building now occupied by Ernest Henrich, corner of Massey and Prospect streets, was purchased and removed to its present site. I think it was bought of Samuel Buckley, an old stage proprietor, who lived there. The board of supervisors elected in February consisted of eighteen republicans and four democrats. As this was not a city in those days, the village and town of Watertown together had but one supervisor.

As to national affairs, outside of the exciting politics of that year, not until early in February did the house of representatives elect its speaker, a deadlock having lasted from the meeting of that congress until then, two months, during which time the republican members had voted constantly for John Sherman, (now senator from Ohio,) except a few of them, who held out stubbornly against him. These finally agreed with the others upon Mr. Pennington of New Jersey, who was elected with John W. Forney, the still well-remembered Philadelphia journalist, as clerk. President Buchanan, however, getting tired of waiting for the house to organize, had sent his message to the senate five weeks before. The first week in April Senator Wigfall of Texas made a speech in the senate that occasioned a great deal of comment throughout the country from the fact that he was disgracefully drunk at the time. The news-



papers, except some of the scrupulous democratic ones, gave verbatim reports of the speech, with interjected explanations as to how the speaker appeared at the moment, and the scene in the senate chamber calculated to intensify the scandal.

There were some interesting events of an international nature that year. Macauley, whose eminence as a historian was then, as now, as great in the minds of Americans as of Englishmen, died about the first of January, probably the latter part of December; but the news was not received here till after 1860 was well started. In April the great prize fight between Heenan (American) and Sayers (English) came off at Allshot, England, where the Englishman got the worst of it, although the English would not admit it.

The democratic nominating convention assembled as early as the 23d of April in the city of Charleston, S. C., occupied a week in trying to arrange a platform, failed to agree, and on the 3d of May adjourned to meet in Baltimore the 18th of June. When the convention re-assembled the two wings of the party—the northern and southern—found themselves wider apart than ever. Some feeble efforts were made to harmonize conflicting ideas, but to no purpose. The southern delegates, headstrong and unyielding, insisted on the right of carrying slaves into free territory, nominated John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky for president and Joseph Lane of Oregon for vice president. The northern convention, with a few scattering votes from the south, nominated Stephen A. Douglas for president and Herschel V. Johnson of Georgia for vice president.

The constitutional union party, composed mainly of conservative, silver gray, pro-slavery whigs, convened at Baltimore the 9th of May, and nominated John Bell of Tennessee for president and Edward Everett of Massachusetts for vice president. Some people styled this a

kangaroo ticket, for the reason that Everett was the stronger man, as the hind legs of this animal are the longest.

On the 16th of May the republican convention met at Chicago. As there was a possibility, if not a strong probability, that the ticket to be put in nomination would be chosen, great interest was taken in the gathering, and several leading republicans, who had been conspicuous in the organization of the party, were spoken of as candidates. Among those named were Mr. Seward of New York, Salmon P. Chase of Ohio, Edward Bates of Missouri, Simon Cameron of Pennsylvania, William L. Dayton of New Jersey, and Abraham Lincoln of Illinois. The republicans of New York were generally and actively for Mr. Seward. This was at least true as to the managers of the party, while there were great numbers of people, who cared more for the triumph of the cause in which the party had enlisted than they did for the success of any man, who rather hoped that some other than Mr. Seward might receive the nomination. This was my feeling. I liked Mr. Seward very well, but I did not like the men who were backing him. I did not like Thurlow Weed. I do not remember that I have said this before in these chapters, but it is the simple truth; I never liked Mr. Weed. Perhaps it was the fault of my early training. He was a violent anti-mason; I was not, though never a mason. He was a whig; I never was, though there were individuals in the whig party for whom I entertained the highest respect. But somehow I never took a fancy to Mr. Weed. I did not like his methods. He did too much whispering. He was not straight-forward, outspoken, ingenuous. No doubt he was a shrewd, sagacious politician, a skillful manipulator of men; no doubt he was a good man in his way; but I did not like his way. It has always appeared to me that when an individual or party is seeking to ac-

comply with some beneficent object, there can be no harm in openly commending it and advocating it in a direct, manly way. Such men as Weed have their sphere of usefulness. They are good as organizers. They are required to lead, for no party can do without leaders. And that is what Weed was, a skillful leader. In that capacity he had few equals. By the side of him Seward and Greeley were nowhere. True, in a sense, *they* were leaders; they proclaimed their convictions and stated the reasons which influenced them, and great numbers followed their lead; their ideas became the ideas of whole sections and influenced the action of great states; but they never undertook to carry conventions by whispering in the ears of delegates, or undertaking to play smart. They were great educators; they instructed men in the principles of government, in statesmanship, which Mr. Weed did not; but then he and such as he may have been required to organize the disciples of the ex-governor and great journalist, and make them practical.

I repeat, I liked Mr. Seward, but not his following, which embraced Mr. Weed and all his clacquers, from Montauk Point to Lake Erie. As a class, these were men in whom I had no faith. They were *Weed's men*, and I was afraid of them.

So I was pleased to learn that Mr. Seward had failed to receive the nomination, and that Abraham Lincoln had been made our standard bearer. True, I did not know much about him, but the little I did know was in his favor. Two years before he had stumped Illinois, with Stephen A. Douglas, in opposition to the doctrine of squatter sovereignty, and won great credit. He narrowly escaped being made United States senator as the result of his efforts, and it was fortunate for the country that he did, for had he been chosen it is unlikely that he would have been named for president, and some inferior

man might have been designated for the place. Looking back at these events after the lapse of thirty years, it appears little else than providential that Mr. Lincoln should have been given the helm of our government during the terrible crisis through which the country passed from 1861 to 1865. What other man could have discharged the duties of the trying position in the transcendently able manner he did? No man now questions that he was the man for the time.

The selection of Hannibal Hamlin for vice president was another wise act, and the canvass for Lincoln and Hamlin was one of the most spirited in the history of our politics, and resulted in their triumphant election.

## CHAPTER XLII.

Our Representatives in the 35th, 36th, 37th, and 38th Congresses—Interesting Facts in the Careers of These Gentlemen.

Charles B. Hoard, whose death occurred at Ceredo, West Virginia, Nov. 20, 1886, was born at Springfield, Vermont, June 28, 1805. He was the youngest of a family of six sons and one daughter. In his early youth his father moved to Massachusetts, while his brothers, one or more of them, located in Northern New York, where Charles soon joined them.

He is first heard of in a business capacity as clerk in the land office of George Parish, a land holder contemporary with Vincent Leray de Chaumont and other French exiles, who left France for political reasons. After this he served an apprenticeship as a silversmith and watchmaker, and while following this trade conceived the idea which was one of the main purposes of his life, namely, the making of a portable steam engine, compact, simple, within the reach of all, and applicable to all cases where moderate power was required. Finding a man of similar taste, and a practical machinist, in the person of the late Gilbert Bradford, then a foreman in Goulding's machine shop, they united their efforts, persevered in correcting each fault as it appeared, and in 1850 Mr. Hoard's idea became a practical working machine.

One of its first uses was in running a printing press. This attracted the attention of Horace Greeley, who lectured in Watertown about that time, and his enthusiastic praise in a letter to the New York Tribune called the attention of people in all parts of the country to the new power, which was soon in general use, and proved a for-



tune to all connected with it. Faults were discovered and remedied, difficulties met and overcome, but finally success was achieved ; and rapidly, too, for in the spring of 1855, five years after the experiment, Mr. Hoard bought Bradford's interest, paying him \$25,000 for it. Mr. Bradford, in reply to questions of friends regarding his selling out from a business apparently so prosperous, is credited with saying "he thought it was about noon in the enterprise ; that it had reached a measure of success that could not possibly be maintained." Mr. Hoard at once associated his two oldest sons with him in the business. Mr. Bradford's prediction did not prove correct ; the business continued to increase, and when the rebellion broke out, in 1861, the capacity of his shops had increased to a complete engine each day, and more orders were coming in than could be filled. Every state and most of the then territories, besides the British provinces and West Indies, used them. His early convictions were confirmed and hopes realized. His later and best market had been to the planters of the southern states. This continued until the breaking out of the rebellion, after which the market was largely in the oil regions.

Mr. Hoard early took an active interest in political affairs. He was justice of the peace in the town of Antwerp for many years, and postmaster under Presidents Jackson and Van Buren. He was elected member of assembly in 1837, when he took a leading part in forming the free banking system of New York, which lasted until superseded by the present national bank system. In 1842 he was elected county clerk, and removed to Watertown. Up to this date his affiliations were with the democratic party. The republican party was organized in 1855, and in 1856 he was elected the first republican congressman from this district, and was re-elected in 1858. He was thus in congress during the entire administration of Mr. Buchanan.



At the breaking out of the war, having a contract to furnish a number of thousand firearms, he turned his engine manufactory into an armory for the construction of army rifles for the government. By the time the industry was established on a paying basis the war drew to a close ; the government had supplied the wants of the army, and, having no further need for firearms, instituted a severe system of inspection of arms produced for it. In his case the government agents even branded as "condemned" many parts of the "model" rifle, which had been supplied him by the government as a standard, and which he had taken to pieces and put with parts of his own make, as a test of the unfairness of the inspection instituted by the government to avoid taking what they did not then require. Thus the enterprise resulted in his case, as in that of many other private armorers in the country, in the loss of nearly his entire fortune.

To show the character of the man it may be stated that when one of his special friends suggested that he should compromise with his creditors for the sake of his family, that they might not be left penniless, he indignantly replied : "I thought you knew me ; my obligations will be paid to the utmost farthing," and they were.

In his prosperous days he had invested in some property in West Virginia, and about 1869 he went to Ceredo and turned his attention to improving his property in that vicinity.

I knew Mr. Hoard, but not intimately, so I give the impressions of others rather than my own. I judge he was one of the ablest men we have ever had in the county, everything considered, and one of the most upright. He was a sagacious politician, an excellent financier and a superior mechanic, an efficient clerk and an able and industrious legislator. In a word, he was an uncommonly strong man ; he had a strong will and earnest convictions. He was a little too positive in his make-up for

his own benefit, for he never yielded a point when he deemed himself right. Those who differed with him concerning any matter which he considered material did so at the risk of losing his friendship, if not of incurring his enmity. He stood by you while you stood by him and seconded his views, but no longer. He led the barn-burner wing of the democracy in this county, as Preston King did in St. Lawrence, and when the republican party was organized they went into it together, with most of their followers. He had many estimable traits of character, with some faults. These, however, gave him more trouble than they did any one else.

Ambrose W. Clark, who succeeded him in congress, was a very different style of man. Colonel Clark was a man who was well thought of by all who enjoyed his acquaintance, for he was friendly, amiable and sympathetic.

Mr. Clark was born near Cooperstown, in this state, February 19, 1810, received a common school education, and entered, at the age of 16, as apprentice, the printing office of the "Watchtower," a Jacksonian paper, published by E. B. Crandall at Cooperstown, where he remained until of age. Shortly after he took the position of foreman in the office of the "Oneida Whig," a weekly journal published at Utica. This he had filled but a short time when the Hon. William H. Averill, an influential citizen of Cooperstown and a life-long friend, made him a proposition to return to Cooperstown and assume the management of the "Otsego Republican," a journal then lately established in the interest of the whig party. It was in vain that Mr. Clark urged that he had no means with which to engage in an enterprise of that kind. Mr. Averill told him that he had habits of industry and economy, which are capital to a young man, and he would stand by him. So under that gentleman's advice, at a little past 21 years of age, he became

the proprietor of the "Otsego Republican," which has from that time to this, a period of nearly sixty years, done good service, first for the whig party, and later for the republican organization. There Mr. Clark remained five years, when, through the influence of parties who had made large investments west, and who expected to jump into wealth at a bound, he was induced to sell his office and go with them to Wisconsin in 1837. Upon arriving at Milwaukee he found that the great real estate bubble had burst, and his speculative friends, who supposed they were rich, found themselves poorer if not wiser men, and, discouraged by this state of affairs, he returned home, and soon after accepted an offer to establish a paper in Lowville, which he named the "Northern Journal," and which has flourished ever since, and is now known as the Journal & Republican.

When Mr. Clark came to Lowville the village contained about 1,200 inhabitants. He started his paper with a subscription list of about 500. It was neatly printed, from new type. It met with general favor, not only from political friends, but from opponents ; and the list went up to 1,000 before Mr. Clark retired from the concern.

In 1846, tempted by what he deemed a better opening, Mr. Clark moved from Lowville to Watertown, and assumed control of the Black River Journal, which had been conducted by Elder Joel Green, and which was originally the property of Ben Cory, a practical printer from one of the southern counties, who established the first whig paper published in Watertown. Mr. Clark changed the title of the paper to the "Northern New York Journal." At this time the whig party in this county was under the leadership of Eli Farwell, Joseph Mullin, Charles E. and John Clark, B. F. Hotchkins, William Smith, Hiram Holcomb, Solon and Edwin S. Massey, Moses Eames, Bernard Bagley, Charles D.

Wright, John Sheldon, I. H. Fisk, N. W. Streeter, W. H. Angell, E. G. Merrick, John Fowler, Henry Esselstyne, Hiram Dewey, Russell B. Biddlecom, William A. Gilbert, Solon Hungerford, William C. Pierrepont, Calvin Littlefield, Hiram McCullom and Ben Cōry. This last gentleman is described as a short, thick-set man, weighing about 200, without polish, but full of energy and push, which is evident from the fact that his paper was a complete success.

Mr. Clark retained the proprietorship of this paper, except for a brief period, until 1862, when it passed out of his hands, and ultimately, after one or two changes of ownership, was purchased by the proprietors of the Times and Reformer, thus forming a part of the plant of this concern.

Mr. Clark was a zealous and uncompromising whig from the birth to the dissolution of that party; and he has been a staunch republican from the day that party was organized. He was a devoted friend to Weed and Seward, believed in them very thoroughly, and was therefore anti-slavery in his predilections. Like most old whigs, he had the most implicit faith in the cause in which they were engaged, and he never took the least stock in the principles and measures of their opponents. He was one of those men who never split their tickets, deeming an incompetent and unworthy member of his party preferable to any kind of a democrat. Probably he was not aware that there were bad men in his party—he may not have cared to know it if there were—while regarding his political opponents as all bad.

Mr. Clark made a good newspaper, clean in typographical appearance, clean in its editorial articles, clean in the character of its selections. He probably never pretended to be a literary man, but he wrote good sense, in a clear, intelligible style. I know that many of

his editorials were set up from the case without being written, and I suspect that is true as to the majority of them. Mr. Clark paid me a compliment that I have prized almost as much as any I have ever received. When introduced a long time ago by a mutual friend, he remarked: "Brockway, oh, yes, you are the editor of the Oswego Palladium; that is one of the few papers among my exchanges from which I have dared to copy miscellaneous and other matter without reading. I have been sure it was clean and wholesome, and tending to lift public sentiment, not to lower and vitiate it."

Mr. Clark was fond of a horse, and was a good judge of the animal, and generally had one or two of the best horses in the county. He was thoroughly practical; there was nothing visionary about him. Mr. Clark wielded a large political and personal influence. When he was at the head of the Otsego, Lowville and Watertown papers, the editor of the village newspaper was an important man, more so than he is now; for in our day it is the paper that has influence in moulding public sentiment and directing the movements of politicians and parties, rather than the individual at the head of it. Mr. Clark was never a great man in the common acceptance of the term; and yet he was a much greater one than many who have had the reputation of being able, learned and profound; for he performed whatever task he undertook in a faithful, painstaking, conscientious manner. He was entitled to the nomination of his party for congress in 1860 as much as any man in the district, and the republicans did a fitting thing in making him their representative. He discharged the duties of the position with the same care and fidelity he had exhibited in the editorial chair. He never made speeches, but left that business to those who preferred to talk rather than to work, while he was content to look after matters in

which the great body of his constituents were interested. Mr. Clark's nomination for congress was ratified by the people, and he served in that body four years, during the administration of Mr. Lincoln, from the beginning to near the close of the war. He afterwards went to South America as consul to Valparaiso, and remained four years. In all his public positions he served with credit to himself and to the satisfaction of his employers.



## CHAPTER XLIII.

The First Year of the War—Local and General Events—Death of Douglas, Prince Albert and Count Cavour—How News Came from Europe—Opening of the Telegraph to California.

One cannot deal with the events of 1861, either generally or locally, without being constantly impressed with the fact that the country was engaged in a great war for its preservation, which broke out in April of that year. The feeling was all but universal, during that spring and early summer, that the end of that year would see the rebellion a thing of the past. The first call for troops was for ninety days' service, and was very generally accepted as the expectation of the government to put down the rebellion in about that time. And even as late as the 29th of August—more than a month after the terrible rout of the Union army at Bull Run—the still sanguine editor of the *Watertown Reformer* of those days published as his "leader" an editorial entitled, "The Rebellion Crumbling." How little people realized at that time that the real fighting of the war had actually not so much as begun! The rebellion did not "crumble" till three years and eight months after that, and then it collapsed from all sides at once.

It is not within the scope of these articles to review the progress of the war, nor the doings of even the soldiers who went out from our own vicinity to battle for their country. There is no need of it. The memories of their glorious deeds in camp and in field and the thousand incidents of precious interest to themselves and their comrades are recounted at the "camp-fires" of their grand

army posts and at the frequent re-unions of soldiers and sailors ; they are told in many books and sung in many songs.

Watertown and every town and village where the Times circulates were repeatedly the scenes of patriotic meetings, flag presentations, pole raisings, departure of companies to join their regiments, of regiments to join the army, and of the whole variety of the events and conditions of "grim-visaged war." Mention will be made, however, of a few matters connected with the war.

Washington's birthday was celebrated in grander style in Watertown than it had been in many years—if ever—before, in accordance with the then rising patriotic feeling.

On the 24th of April, Fort Sumter having been taken by the rebels and the ninety-days troops called for, a "Demonstration at Washington Hall," as the Daily Reformer of the next day called it, was held, which that paper reported thus : "The vast assemblage showed unmistakably the deep and profound feeling of patriotism that pervades the hearts of our people. The hall was crowded to its utmost repletion. The enthusiasm was intense and wild." G. C. Sherman was president, and the vice presidents were John Bradley, W. H. Angel, Pearson Mundy, B. Bagley, Addison M. Farwell, M. V. V. Rosa, S. Boon, C. D. Morgan, L. Palmer, S. D. Hungerford, William Lord, William McAllister, Gardner Towne ; secretaries, John Fayel, J. W. Ingalls, A. H. Hall. The committee on subscriptions "reported \$2,300 raised for the cause."

"A liberty pole" 122 feet high was raised on the Public Square on the 4th of May, with imposing ceremonies.

The Daily Reformer of May 30 announces that the military board at Albany had authorized the forming into one regiment of the nine companies raised in Jefferson county. This was the thirty-fifth regiment, Colonel W.

C. Browne, Lieutenant Colonel S. L. Potter, Major N. B. Lord. The same regiment is spoken of thus, in the *National Republican*, published then at the capital of the nation, for July 18, 1861 :

“This fine regiment, numbering 850 men, was raised principally in Jefferson county, six of the companies being from that county. The other four companies came from New York city, Buffalo, Liberty and Madison. The regiment is armed with Springfield muskets, is well drilled, and comes fully provided with camp equipage. They have a band of fourteen pieces, led by Prof. Choat, and a drum corps of twenty-two men under Drum Major Fish. Their principal officers are as follows: Colonel W. C. Browne, Lieutenant Colonel Potter, Major Lord, Adjutant Lyttle, Quartermaster W. P. Gunn, Surgeon Van Slaik, Assistant Surgeon French, Chaplain S. L. Merrill, Captains Winslow, Angel, Flower, Smith, Rich, Elwell, Mendell, Todd, Spaulsbury and Camp.”

Hon. Edward Everett delivered an address at Adams, on the 12th of September, on the occasion of the “Union agricultural fair,” as it was called. He addressed the people of Watertown, in Washington hall, on the 25th of October, on “The Origin and Character of the War.”

On the 22nd of April, the demand for the daily publication of the war news became so decided in the then village of Watertown as to warrant the starting of a daily edition of the *Reformer*, which up to that time had been a weekly paper; and from that day to this the *Daily Reformer*, as the lineal predecessor of the *Daily Times*, has been an established institution here. There was at the same time a daily paper in Watertown which had been started some months earlier, probably about the first of January. It was published by A. H. Hall and edited by G. C. Bragdon, and called the “*Daily News*.”

When something like one year old it was purchased by the proprietors of the Reformer, and the two dailies were consolidated.

These were the days of Apollo hall and the Watertown cadets' parades and balls. Mark Sheldon was writing very interesting letters to the Reformer from Italy. Base-ball was not the "national game" in those years. In this year (1861) the national game was played with muskets and artillery; yet the young men were not all of them entirely filled with eagerness for rushing into the war, and it is rather a relief from the overwhelming exclusiveness of war news and warlike doings reported in the papers of that time to read that on the 11th of May the Potsdam Zouave base-ball club came to Watertown and played with the Adams base-ball club, on the fair grounds, and, as the press chronicler of that day puts it, "the Adams boys got scooped." About the same time Moses and Lovett Eames purchased the lower part of Beebee island, and began reconstructing buildings there for machine shops. The Antwerp academy, now Ives seminary, started that summer with seventy pupils. On the 1st of July, J. E. Kemp began running a daily line of mail stages to Clayton, via Perch River, Stone Mills and Lafargeville, connecting with boats on the river for Ogdensburg. Fare to Ogdensburg from Watertown was \$1.75, which was less than by rail via Potsdam, the latter then being the only way of getting to Ogdensburg by rail. The same month the name of the Rome & Watertown railroad was changed to Rome, Watertown & Ogdensburg railroad.

Mild weather lasted until into December this year. There was no frost until late in October. A propellor of the Northern transportation line left Ogdensburg on the 9th day of December, and reached Chicago in safety, with passengers and freight, seven days later.

Kansas was admitted to the Union in January. A bill organizing the territories of Colorado, Nevada and Dakota passed congress in March, and became a law by President Lincoln's signature, it being among his first official acts. Ira Harris succeeded William H. Seward, on the 4th of March, in the United States senate, Seward becoming Lincoln's secretary of state. Early in June the most popular of the northern democratic statesmen, Stephen A. Douglas, who had been the presidential nominee of the northern wing of the democratic party the year before, died at Chicago. About the same time, Count Cavour, the great statesman of the unification of Italy, died.

This was one of the years when the latest news from Europe was received in this way: A news agent came over on every steamship, and on the voyage he prepared and edited a pretty full summary of news from all the London, Paris and Liverpool papers that had been published after the last previous steamer had left Liverpool, up to the day of his own departure. This summary he sealed up in a water-tight cask, and, on passing Cape Race, Newfoundland, the steam yacht of the Associated Press ran out to the steamship and picked up the cask, which the agent threw overboard as the steamship sped on toward New York or Boston. This summary of European news was telegraphed from Cape Race, and published all over Canada and the United States, even to San Francisco, at least two days, and sometimes three and a half days, before the arrival of the steamship at New York. This method of obtaining news from Europe only five to six days old was in practice from about 1854 till November, 1866, when the Atlantic cable became operative.

The above explains the receipt of the most important piece of foreign news that reached this country during the year 1861, which appeared in the Watertown Re-



former of December 24th of that year, and reads thus :  
“The Persia passed Cape Race on the morning of the 22nd. She brings intelligence of the decease of his royal highness, Prince Albert, (the husband of Queen Victoria,) who expired at noon of Sunday, December 15, of gastric fever.”

The greatest event of the year in our domestic operations, in the arts of peace, was probably the opening of telegraphic communication between San Francisco and all parts of the United States on the 24th of October.

In 1861 Jefferson county was represented in the assembly by David Montague, David J. Wager and Harvey Bailey ; St. Lawrence by Charles Richardson, Edwin A. Merritt and Clark S. Chittenden ; Oswego by D. C. Littlejohn, Richard K. Sanford and Mason Salisbury ; Lewis by Edmund Baldwin. To the senate, James A. Bell was re-elected from this district.



## CHAPTER XLIV.

The Senatorial Contest in 1861—Greeley and Evarts the Leading Candidates—The Dark Horse (Ira Harris) Wins.

In 1861 William M. Evarts and Horace Greeley were the leading candidates for United States senator ; but Ira Harris won the prize. I took a hand in that fight myself, and rendered such service to the editor of the Tribune as I was able.

Shortly after the election in 1860 I received a letter from Mr. Greeley in regard to the organization of the legislature, in which he favored Lucius Robinson for speaker and some honest man for clerk. His letter contained this paragraph :

“As to myself, I *would* like to go to the senate, and *would not* like to go into the cabinet. I think my name in that connection would exasperate the Fire-Eaters, who have been taught to believe me a decidedly vicious and dangerous Negro—a kind of Dismal Swamp “Dred.” I don’t like official routine, with great, dull dinners: I do like my little farm, if I can only get time to visit it, and stay there a little. Besides, I belong to the Tribune, and as a senator could continue to work for it, while as a cabinet man I could not. But I don’t want to be paraded in the newspapers as declining places never offered me.”

Six days later he wrote me thus:

“I am sure I can do nothing to make myself United States senator, and I am not even sure that I would try very hard if sure of success. But I guess Seward will take it rather than have me go there; and so I guess we may as well let it go. At all events, I can do nothing for myself.”

Nevertheless, his friends (and these embraced the old anti-slavery whigs and that portion of the republican party which, on account of its opposition to slavery, had quit the democracy) continued to use his name for senator, and when the legislature met in January they

had determined to bring him forward for the position. Mr. Weed knew, what the opponents of Mr. Seward did not, that that gentleman was to have a place in Mr. Lincoln's cabinet ; so he apparently gave little attention to the senatorial question. Still, it must not be supposed that he was wholly asleep. He was not that kind of a man. He was quietly looking around for some one to take Mr. Seward's seat on the expiration of his term, and ultimately decided that Mr. Evarts must be brought out. Of Evarts not much was known beyond the fact that he had been a "silver gray whig." But he was a good lawyer, and could make a strong speech in case of necessity.

Here it may be stated that Mr. Weed did not enjoy the full confidence of the radical portion of the republicans. He was not believed to be at heart an anti-slavery man. One who knew him better than I ever did states that "he was really an admirer and advocate of the institution of slavery ; not the real slavery, perhaps, that existed, but such slavery as he thought of—an easy, gracious master, with broad acres, thousands of happy retainers, and a hearty, generous hospitality. He was always coquetting with the representatives of slavery, and always parrying the blows of its opponents."

As the day approached on which a senator was to be chosen, the friends of Mr. Greeley assembled in Albany in considerable force. Their headquarters were in the old Congress hall, a building adjacent to the old state-house. Occupying the southern parlors of that hotel, they were in close proximity to the assembly chamber, and had easy access to it. In their rooms were David Dudley Field, Charles A. Dana, J. F. Cleveland, and a great many others whom I do not at this moment remember with sufficient distinctness to name. Lieutenant Governor Campbell, "Bob Campbell," as his numerous admirers were in the habit of calling him, had rooms in

the hotel, very near the headquarters of the Greeley people, and thither the managers of the canvass were wont to repair for private consultation. In fact, Governor Campbell's reception-room was the place where the real business was transacted.

The friends of Evarts made their headquarters in the executive chamber, where Weed received frequent reports through his man Friday, Hugh Hastings.

The canvass was fierce and bitter between the friends of Greeley and the friends of Evarts. It was a fight between the radicals and conservatives, between those who regarded slavery as a social curse and its extermination a political necessity, and those who were willing the institution should live if the republicans could have charge of the federal government, and have the disposition of the offices. The latter were negative men, while the former were bold, resolute, dashing politicians, that were always in the saddle, ready, willing and anxious to do battle for their cherished opinions.

The two factions were about equal. Neither could count up a majority of the members; for there was in this case, as has often happened in similar ones, a score of gentlemen who did not like either of the men named. They were republicans of know-nothing proclivities. To accommodate them a dark horse was trotted out. His name was Ira Harris. They made a still hunt—patting both contestants on the back, and keeping in such a position that the friends of Greeley would prefer Harris to Evarts, and the friends of Evarts would in like manner prefer the dark horse to the man who had defeated Seward at Chicago.

One who was present at the caucus, which was held with closed doors, no person being admitted who was not a member or officer of the senate or assembly, or a reporter in one of the two houses who was a proclaimed republican, furnished these particulars. By accident the

friends of Harris had a majority of the caucus committee, and they issued a call for a meeting to nominate a senator Saturday evening, and in so doing stole a march on Mr. Weed, who had not expected the caucus would be held before Monday evening.

The caucus assembled pursuant to notice, all the members being present, with a single exception. The names of the candidates were duly presented, when the voting commenced. On the first ballot the vote stood, Evarts 42; Greeley 40; Harris 20; Noyes 6; Smith 4; Selden 2; Raymond 1. The second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh ballots had substantially the same result. Then Mr. Wager of Jefferson (the late D. J. Wager of Philadelphia) moved to confine the balloting to the three highest candidates, which was lost. While this proposition was being discussed, Hamilton Harris sent for the gentleman who had charge of his brother's interest inside to come to him in the lobby. Weed had sent for "Ham," and proposed to adjourn the caucus until Monday night, so as to give him an opportunity to bring the Evarts votes over to Ira. Ham asked to consult a friend inside, and sent for the individual above referred to. On his appearance, he said to Ham, "Give the 'old man' Sunday and Monday, and he will cajole, cheat and purchase you out of your boots. You want to steer clear of that proposition." Nevertheless, the motion to postpone was made by the Evarts men, and voted down by the joint action of the friends of Greeley and Harris.

The eighth ballot showed 47 for Greeley, 39 for Evarts, and 19 for Harris—all who had voted scattering but Senator Abell, who voted from first to last for Raymond, going over to Greeley. When this result was announced to Weed he reluctantly gave orders for the desertion of Evarts, and the transfer of his votes to Harris. On the ninth ballot, Greeley had 46, Evarts 12, Harris 48. On the tenth, the vote stood, Greeley 49, Evarts 2, Harris 60.

On the motion to make the nomination unanimous, Senators Abell and Williams voted no.

This was the first defeat Weed had ever sustained in a whig or republican legislature. From that day he was only occasionally powerful for mischief, either in the legislature or in conventions, as when he defeated General Wadsworth at the polls, when running as the republican candidate for governor before the people, and the nomination of Hon. William H. Robertson for governor in the convention that nominated Dix.

After the election was over I wrote Mr. Greeley an account of the caucus, and received a reply, (written from Washington,) from which I quote the following :

"I thank you for your account of the doings at Albany. I ought not to have allowed my name to go before the caucus, seeing that success was hopeless from the start, and I cannot avoid the imputation of having sought the office and of quarreling with Weed and Seward because I did not get it; when, in fact, they have done nothing for a year that I so thoroughly justify and approve as I do their opposition to me. I like Seward far better than I could have done had he supported me, and wish he had always shown a corresponding spirit. My vote was so large that I do not feel at all mortified by the result; I only regret the obligation it has imposed on me of coming here to engage in a hopeless struggle to repay some friends for the efforts they have made for me."

And so on.

Arriving home from Albany Monday evening, I found George William Curtis holding forth to a brilliant audience at Washington hall. At the close of the lecture I ascended the platform, and, taking him by the hand, informed him that I had just returned from the state capital, where I had, with others, been trying to make Mr. Greeley senator.

"Do you know I am very glad you have failed?" Curtis responded.

"Men are born for spheres," he continued. "Mr. Greeley's sphere is to edit the Tribune. It would be a terrible mistake to transfer him from that position to the United States senate."

I did not dissent from the opinion.



## CHAPTER XLV.

James A. Bell—State Senator Six Years—President Pro Tem. of that Body and Chairman of the Finance Committee—The Author of Important Insurance and Other Legislation—A Useful Man.

As editor of the Times I have often spoken in terms of praise of James A. Bell, who represented this district in the state senate three successive terms, taking his seat for the first time on the first of January, 1860. I knew him intimately, having lived with him a good part of the time I was in Albany. I have had the impression that he was never quite appreciated in this county. He was regarded by his fellow-citizens here as a successful merchant and a good business man, but few appeared to know that he was a superior legislator; in fact, one of the most clear-headed, clean-handed, safe and useful men ever commissioned as law-maker from this or any other county. He would have made a first-class governor; he would have filled almost any office requiring executive and business talents with consummate ability.

Mr. Bell was born in Hebron, Washington county, N. Y., on the 8th day of February, 1814. In 1826 his parents, with six children, removed to this part of the state, then known as the Black River country, and settled on a farm in the town of Brownville. The summers of his early manhood were spent on the farm with his father, and the winters in attending school. With the exception of a few terms in a select school and the Watertown Academy, then taught by Joseph Mullin, his education was obtained in our common schools. At the age of seventeen he engaged in teaching district schools during the winter months, and farming sum-



mers. At the age of twenty he began teaching select schools in Brownville, in Kingston and several other places in Canada, and in the western states.

Soon after returning from the west he engaged in the mercantile business in Brownville with Dr. J. K. Bates of that place.

He first became known to the public, as a politician, so far as I have learned, at the formation of the republican party in 1855, having previously been a whig and an ardent admirer of Henry Clay. In 1856 he was elected to the office of supervisor from the town of Brownville, and re-elected to the same office the next year. The good, practical judgment which he displayed in the management of town and county affairs brought him favorably before the public, and contributed largely to his subsequent political advancement. In 1859 he was elected to represent the eighteenth senatorial district, then composed of the counties of Jefferson and Lewis, in the state senate, by a large majority over his democratic competitor. In this capacity he served his constituency and the state with marked ability and usefulness.

As a suitable recognition of his impartiality and financial ability he was chosen president pro tem. of the senate, and placed at the head of the committee on finance, and made a member of the insurance, canal, and some other important committees.

He received the credit, which he well deserved, for heroically resisting and finally defeating the Herculean efforts of the New York Central railroad to procure the repeal of the law which prohibited that company from collecting more than two cents per mile for carrying passengers. He also stubbornly opposed the city railroad legislation of 1860, with which so many of the leading politicians of the state were identified and largely interested. The public scandal which at this time attached to the passage of these corrupt charters over the gov-

ernor's vetoes contributed largely to defeat the nomination of Governor Seward in the Chicago convention of that year. On the contrary, the legislature of 1861 was entitled to universal commendation for the efforts it made to preserve the integrity of the Union and avert the threatened secession of the southern states ; also for the promptness with which it met the sound of the first hostile gun, and so liberally furnished the government with men and means to subdue the rebellion.

The report of the bombardment and evacuation of Fort Sumter reached Albany on Sunday afternoon, April 14th. Mr. Bell was immediately called in counsel with the governor, comptroller and adjutant general, to consider the situation, and devise some plan to meet the emergency. The conference lasted until late in the night. It was finally determined to raise, furnish and equip thirty-five regiments of men ; and for the purpose of defraying the expense thereof, to appropriate the sum of three million dollars from the state treasury. A bill for that purpose was drawn and passed through the legislature the next day. When the proclamation of President Lincoln calling for 75,000 men was received, it was seen that the quota apportioned to the state of New York was only seventeen regiments of 780 men each. However, on the 3d of May, before this quota was filled, the president made another call for 42,000 additional volunteers to serve for three years, and for adding ten regiments to the regular army. Under these calls the state of New York did, at its own cost and expense, furnish, equip and send into the field thirty-eight regiments—three more than was at first authorized by the state. Although Mr. Bell's duties as senator did not require him to attend to the details of raising regiments and caring for the men, yet he did spend considerable time in visiting their camps and recruiting stations, and in a general way looking after their interests in Washington and upon the battle-fields.

As the rebellion manifested greater strength and obstinacy than was at first anticipated, the authorities at Washington became exceedingly anxious to unite the loyal element in the north in favor of a vigorous prosecution of the war. For this purpose they advised that a series of union meetings be held in various parts of the state, and that the call for these meetings, and the nominating conventions as well, should be made broad and liberal enough to embrace all loyal citizens, without regard to party. Meetings of that character were extensively held during the summer and fall of that year, and resulted in sending several loyal and some doubtful democrats to the legislature of 1862 by republican votes. Mr. Bell was in full sympathy with this movement.

Mr. Bell appeared to have a peculiar and natural aptitude for meeting and wisely disposing of the new and intricate questions which arose during his term of public service. In confirmation of this the following incident may be mentioned as a sample :

In 1860 the insurance department was organized, and William Barnes appointed superintendent. All the insurance companies proposing to do business in this state were requested to file their annual statements, showing the condition of their respective companies, in that department, and, if satisfactory to the superintendent, were to have authority to insure the lives and property of our citizens. For some reason Mr. Barnes referred the trustees of several foreign companies, notably of the London, Liverpool and Globe, to the insurance committee of the senate, of which Mr. Bell was a member. During the investigation of the affairs of this company, it came to the knowledge of the committee that the "home officers," anticipating a war with this country, in consequence of the seizure and imprisonment of Mason and Slidell from the British steamer Trent, had withdrawn all their securities, thus leaving the insured at the mercy of foreign directors, who could not be

reached through our courts in case of loss. Mr. Bell said: "In view of these circumstances, were it an original proposition, I would reject their application, for the reason that there is now an abundance of capital in this country to form strong and reliable companies, sufficient to meet the wants of all our citizens; and that our own people should be allowed to reap whatever profits there may be in the business. But," he continued, "this is not an original question, inasmuch as these foreign companies have now a large number of outstanding risks on the lives and property of our people."

In conclusion, he "informed the applicants that the company they represented, and all other foreign companies, should be required to deposit, in the insurance department, say, \$100,000, in United States bonds, for the protection of the insured, and to provide for the occurrence of such events in the future; and with the approval of his associates on the committee, he would prepare a bill embodying these requirements, and introduce it in the senate the next day." The trustees pronounced these conditions "new!" "onorous!" "unheard of!" and said that they would not comply with them; that "the financial ability of the London, Liverpool and Globe was above suspicion; the strongest insurance company on the globe; that its board of managers was composed of the best insurance men in the whole world." Mr. Bell said he "was not disposed to question its responsibility, nor the responsibility of the gentlemen who then appeared before the committee, as several of their members were reputed to be millionaires." He also said, "If they would deposit their individual bond in the insurance department, conditioned for the payment of all losses for which these companies may be liable," he would advise Mr. Barnes to reinstate them on the books of the insurance department. This they indignantly declined to do, falling back on the high standing of their companies. Mr. Bell introduced his

bill, and carried it through the different stages of legislation without opposition until it reached the "committee of the whole," where it encountered unlooked for opposition. Senator Folger led the opposition, and inveighed strongly against it, repeating substantially the arguments of the trustees before the insurance committee, and, as a last resort to defeat the bill, he submitted a written offer from the companies, agreeing to defray all Mr. Bell's expenses and pay for the time spent if he would go to England and examine the condition of the companies. Mr. Bell thanked them for their liberal offer, and said he had no reason to doubt their responsibility ; it was their "come-at-ability" that he was after. The discussion continued late in the night. Mr. Bell arose and stated the case clearly in all its details and surroundings, and then moved that the committee rise and report the bill favorably to the senate. The motion was carried by a large majority, and in due time the bill became a law, and they were compelled to buy our bonds, and make the required deposits. The next legislature extended the provisions of that law to all the insurance companies doing business in this state, whether foreign or domestic.

During his whole senatorial career Mr. Bell displayed great practical wisdom in dealing with the many difficult and complex questions which agitated the country at that time. At no other period in the history of our country had the wisdom and resources of the country been so thoroughly taxed as during the six years he represented this district in the senate. Nor were his labors confined to the senate chamber. His counsel was sought by the several governors who occupied the executive chamber ; and the leading position which he occupied in this state gave him influence with the president and secretary of war, which he used on several important occasions to compose difficulties which had arisen between the state and the federal authorities.



## CHAPTER XLVI.

The Unexpected War—The North Slow to Realize the Inevitable—  
Driven to the Conflict—The Result—Mr. Greeley's Plan—The Ways  
of Providence.

Few among us had the least apprehension while rallying and voting for Abraham Lincoln in 1860 that we were on the verge of a terrible civil war. Had we been able to forecast the future ; had the loyal men of the north clearly foreseen the consequences of casting their ballots for Lincoln and for Douglas ; had they been fully aware that the slave states would undertake to fight their way out of the Union, and so involve the country in a bloody war, it is not at all likely they would have deviated from the course they felt constrained to pursue. The truth is, the representatives of the slave-holding states had for years been growing aggressive and insolent. They insisted that northern men should not talk about slavery ; Mr. Greeley was assaulted in the streets of Washington by an Arkansas congressman for no other reason than that he was outspoken in favor of freedom ; Charles Sumner was nearly killed while writing at his desk in the senate chamber for some utterance that was distasteful to a representative from South Carolina ; an act had been forced through congress requiring northern people to assist in the recapture and return of their runaway slaves. All these things grated harshly upon the better feelings of our people, who were beginning soberly to inquire if America was really the free country about which so much had been spoken in Fourth of July orations and in political harangues. It was becoming more and more evident that freedom and slavery could not



live peacefully together always ; that one or the other must succumb, in which case the country would be all free or all slave. In truth, freedom was for years pretty badly shackled, even in the northern states, prior to 1860. The south had been so imperious in its exactions, and the north had yielded so much—yielded for the sake of peace and to avoid a fuss—that the former came to think we were wanting in spirit, and were prepared to acquiesce in almost any demand it might make. Senator Douglas thought his proposition to open Kansas to emigration from the slave states on the same terms it was opened to the free, and leave the settlers to determine whether the state should be a free or a slave commonwealth, a fair one, and that it ought to be satisfactory to the slaveocracy ; but it was not. They “went back” on him in 1860, in spite of the bid he made for their support. They demanded a nominee for president who was with them all through, not a compromiser, not a half-and-half man.

Affairs were in this condition at the close of the election in 1860. Our northern people were calm and unexcited. They had voted as they had been in the habit of voting, as impelled by a sense of duty, and were willing to abide the consequences. They did not dream, however, that we were to have a war. True, the southern fire-eaters were making fearful threats ; they talked of disrupting the Union, of setting up a government of their own, of southern independence, and all that ; but they had repeatedly done this before, repeatedly spoken of their wrongs, and desired the north to take notice that they would not always allow their rights to be interfered with. They had done so large a business in this line that our people took little stock in their menaces, regarding them as the silly vaporings of fools or madmen.

But the southern leaders were in dead earnest ; and immediately after the election commenced making prepara-

tions to carry out their threats. South Carolina took the initiative in the movement to break up the Union, and as early as December, 1860, her senators in congress resigned, and a bill was introduced in the legislature of the Palmetto state to raise and equip 10,000 volunteers. Georgia and Alabama very soon followed in the same direction. By the middle of February, 1861, a Provisional Government had been organized, and on the 18th, Jeff. Davis was inaugurated president of the Confederate States of America.

And still our people did not anticipate war. Of course they did not know what might happen, but they were unwilling to believe that there was any considerable number of men at the south so misguided as seriously to desire to break up the government, and they could not understand why anybody should be so short-sighted and foolish as to think of appealing to arms. On the 4th of March Mr. Lincoln was inaugurated, and in his inaugural address he spoke to those who were getting up a disturbance at the south as a father would to his beloved children. His words were all words of kindness and affection; but they were not heeded.

On the 12th of April, hostilities were commenced in Charleston Harbor, when the bombardment of Fort Sumter was entered upon by persons acting under the direction of the confederate government. Three days later the president issued a proclamation calling for 75,000 volunteers, and the legislatures of different northern states adopted measures for asserting the supremacy of the federal government. The New York legislature voted 30,000 men and \$3,000,000 for putting down the rebellion. Few, however, supposed there was to be actual conflict. Secretary Seward, it was said, expressed the opinion that the troubles would be over inside ninety days. The men who volunteered under the president's call did not expect to see service. They enlisted as much in expecta-

tion of having a good time as anything. They had no conception of the hardships of camp life, nor of the terrible realities of war. A large share of the men who went to the war from among us under the first call, went for the novelty of the thing, went because others were going, went for fun, and hoped to have a jolly time.

In truth, the war had been in progress a whole year and more before the north became awake to the solemn fact that a bloody conflict was going on, the issue of which was in some measure a matter of doubt. The discovery was made that the war was no joke, but a very serious business, and "the boys in blue" went to work in sober earnest. They then began to win victories. In the first engagements the rebels generally got the best of us; but, finding that we must either conquer or be conquered, our men determined no longer to fool with the chivalry who had inaugurated the rebellion, but to clean them out at all hazards. After that there was no further trouble. For a while the rebels fought desperately, but they discovered that they were overmatched, and for many months before the rebellion finally collapsed it was evident that the downfall of the confederate government was only a matter of time.

The rebels did their best fighting in the beginning of the war, and before the north was thoroughly aroused. When the latter finally "got down to business" it was only a short job to crush out the rebellion. The best fighting material in the southern confederacy had been used up. Moreover, its resources and credit were gone. The war was a stupendous blunder on the part of the south. Our people fought to save the government under which they lived, save it intact.

Had the south been satisfied that slavery could not long exist under a government which was nominally free, that the institution could not stand the light of free discussion, that it was against the best sentiment of the

best people in the whole civilized world, her statesmen might have said frankly to the north, "Your people and ours do not agree upon the slavery question; with you the institution is considered wrong and indefensible; with us it is regarded by some as a blessing, by others as a curse. Without undertaking to decide whether it is right or wrong, we have it fastened upon us; it is part of our political system; a large share of our property is in it, property that we have come by as honestly as you have by yours. It is unjust that we should be deprived of it without a fair cash equivalent. Let the government purchase our slave property, and pay for it what a disinterested commission shall say it is worth."

It is no way likely that the proposition would have been received with the least favor at the north; but suppose the suggestion had been made in good faith. We should have been compelled to consider it, and in the end might have concluded that the south was not unreasonable in her requirements. But the south didn't offer any terms for settling disputed questions that did not embrace separation, so the north had no opportunity to decide what it would have done in the supposed case. Not only so, but the men who controlled sentiment in the slave states were rather desirous of having a trial of strength with the northern people, whom they had met in Washington, New York and elsewhere, and who appeared to be well-disposed, but destitute of pluck. They rather wanted to see whether they would fight. Well, they satisfied themselves on this point before the war closed!

After it was clear that war was unavoidable, some of our northern people—Mr. Greeley among others—suggested the purchase of the slaves. Of course, the idea was hooted at from every quarter. It was ill-timed; it had come too late. But had it come earlier, and had it been accepted, can there be a question that the interests of

the entire country would have been immensely promoted by such an arrangement? See what would have been saved—a half million of lives, more or less, two or three billions in money, and an untold amount of suffering! Then the slave owners would have been compensated for their property; by going to war they received nothing. Then look at the enormous pensions we are paying, and the south is helping pay them, while paying the great debt contracted on account of the war, and getting nothing in return! No one—at least at the north—disputes the rightfulness of these things; they are the legitimate fruits of the war.

In the light of the past, was Mr. Greeley's plan so very unwise? Did it merit the contemptuous treatment it received? Had it been accepted, reconstruction would have been easy, for there would have been no difficulties to compose. The south would have had nothing to complain of; she would have been paid for her property, and might have been friendly, rather than edgewise, toward us, as she now is.

But the Almighty is wiser than man or any number of men. A wise Providence, I have no doubt, decreed the overthrow of slavery in the precise manner in which the work was accomplished. Probably the beneficent result could not have been so well secured in any other way. The tremendous sacrifice made will, no doubt, in time be regarded as insignificant when compared with the great good attained. It was a grand step in the world's evolution.



## CHAPTER XLVII.

Occurrences in 1862—The Union Army Wins Victories at the West—  
Battle of Antietam—Loyal Leagues—How General Wool was Admitted  
to One While Declaring He Could Not Join a Secret Organization.

As already stated, not much headway was made up to January, 1862, in the way of suppressing the great rebellion. The enemy occupied Manassas, the peninsula above Fortress Monroe, Thoroughfare Gap, and the other keys to the Shenandoah valley. Nor had they been shorn of their power at the west. They occupied southern and southwestern Kentucky; held Bowling Green and Cumberland Gap; dominated over the Cumberland and Tennessee rivers, and held our flotilla at bay at Columbus. They were masters of the entire southern Atlantic coast, with a few insignificant exceptions.

But the Union army had not yet got down to work. It had been feeling the enemy, learning his plans, learning if he really desired a square fight, while getting in readiness for whatever might happen. Becoming convinced that the rebels were in for war, the "boys in blue" decided to give them such a dose in that line as would satisfy them. An expedition was fitted out for the coast of North Carolina as early as the 12th of January. On the 7th of February an attack was made on Roanoke Island against the rebels, under command of the once notorious Henry A. Wise. After a weak defense the entrenchments were carried by storm, the rebels abandoning them, and, being pursued, were taken prisoners. Among the rebels killed was Captain O. Jennings Wise, editor of the Richmond Enquirer.



About this time General Thomas met the enemy, under Zollicoffer, at Mill Spring, on the Columbia river, and achieved a handsome victory. This was followed by the taking of Fort Henry, on the Tennessee river, by a naval force under command of Commodore Foote. Then Bowling Green was evacuated by the rebels, who moved further south.

The capture of Fort Henry was followed by a movement upon Fort Donaldson, some fifteen miles distant, where General Grant is first heard of. He left Fort Henry February 12 with a large force, divided into two divisions, while six regiments had accompanied our flotilla up the river. The fort was invested by land the same day. The enemy, 20,000 strong, chafing under their confinement, determined to fight, and on the morning of the 15th sallied forth from their entrenchments. At the outset the rebels did some good fighting, but on the morning of the 16th our forces made a simultaneous advance from all points, when a flag of truce came from General Buckner, proposing a conditional surrender. General Grant, however, declined the modest proffer, and demanded that it should be unconditional.

The rebel general, after protesting against the conditions as "ungenerous and unchivalrous," submitted to the fortune of war. Fifteen thousand of the enemy laid down their arms.

This signal victory created the most unbounded enthusiasm north, and the wildest consternation south. When the intelligence reached Watertown, the old Taylor press on which our daily was then printed was set at work, with ample details of the victory, and kept in operation one entire afternoon, it being apparently impossible to satisfy any one with less than a dozen copies of the paper.

Foote then pushed up the river with five gunboats, and within a day or two had possession of Nashville, the capital of Tennessee. The rebels retreated toward the southwest, established themselves at Corinth, where they were largely reinforced, and where they were prepared to make a stand. They were pursued by General Grant, whose command was attacked by the enemy and driven back to the river, when our gunboats opened a murderous fire upon the advancing foe, and thus converted what at first appeared like defeat into victory.

But I am not relating the story of the war. That has been so often told that it should be familiar to every American citizen. Suffice to say, the Union forces were generally successful in the winter and spring. A fair year's work was put in in 1862. It was in this year that the steam frigate Merrimac, converted into an anomalous sea monster by the rebels, made her appearance in Hampton Roads, and after attacking several federal war ships lying at anchor, and disabling them, threatening to carry death and destruction to every object within reach, was encountered by a little iron-clad Monitor, and so badly smashed as to be no longer a terror to any one. It was in this year that the battle of Fair Oaks was fought, with many other important engagements in the vicinity of Richmond. The famous battle at Antietam was fought in 1862; also the battle of Fredericksburg. It was in 1862 that the Union forces made their way up to New Orleans and established themselves in that city. It was on the 22d of September in that year that President Lincoln issued his emancipation proclamation, to go into effect in such states and parts of states as he should designate on the first of January, 1863. The operations of this year, though not conclusive as to the ultimate triumph of the Union cause, were full of encouragement to all loyal men. While the army of the Potomac had not achieved the success it was hoped it might, our

forces at the west and south had dealt very damaging blows to the enemy, and it was everywhere felt that we were getting the best of him. The western troops appeared to take in the situation earlier than did our men, apparently realizing from the outset that the rebellion was a thing that could not be trifled with. They contained either better fighting material or were better led than our forces operating in Virginia and farther south. In fact, we never made satisfactory progress in the way of suppressing the rebellion until General Grant took command of the army of the Potomac.

There was not much local intelligence in the Watertown daily in 1862. People were too much engrossed in the war to give a great deal of attention to local matters ; so the columns of the paper contained few items relative to home affairs. Besides, the local department was not at that time the great feature in the newspaper it has since become.

Jefferson county was represented in the assembly that year by J. W. Ackley, George W. Hazelton, union democrat of Black River, and William Dewey ; St. Lawrence, by Elias P. Townsley, James Redington, and Calvin T. Hulburt ; Oswego, by Elias Root, Willard Johnson and Benj. E. Bowen ; Lewis, by Henry D. H. Snyder, jr.

The 94th regiment, raised in this county, left Watertown for the seat of war March 14. In passing down the Hudson River R. R. the day following, four cars were thrown from the track while crossing a small bay near Tivoli and precipitated into the river. Four soldiers belonging to Captain Horr's company were killed.

A paragraph in the "News and Reformer" read : "Asa Wilcox has just turned out from his ship-yard at Three Mile Bay a splendid schooner of the largest class for the lake trade. She is called Henry W. Hoag, and

is a credit to the builder." Of this ship-yard nothing now remains save a few decayed chips.

The same paper, on the 7th of July, chronicled the appointment, by Governor Stanford of California, of Lorenzo Sawyer, Esq., as judge of the twelfth judicial district of that state. It is added: "Mr. Sawyer is the oldest son of Jesse Sawyer of the town of Watertown, formerly residing at Huntingtonville."

The list of letters formerly advertised would surprise people today. The "News and Reformer" of August 1, 1862, contained 238 names. Now there are scarcely a dozen letters advertised.

The present court-house in Watertown was occupied for the first time at the general term in October, 1862, and the event was commemorated by a supper at the Woodruff house.

A state ticket, labelled the "Republican Union ticket," was nominated in 1862, which was headed by James S. Wadsworth for governor. Lyman Tremain of Albany was nominated for lieutenant governor, but for some reason the ticket was defeated. Horatio Seymour was chosen to the gubernatorial office. Thurlow Weed has generally had the credit of defeating the brave and patriotic Wadsworth, but whether or not he deserved it, I cannot say. I was not in his confidence. Jefferson rolled up 2,500 majority for Wadsworth, and St. Lawrence upwards of 6,000, and most of the counties west of Albany did well, but they were overborne by New York, Kings, and other counties on the Hudson river.

I think it was in 1862 that "loyal leagues" were established all through the northern states. I assume this, for our state was filled with them. We had a very large "league" in Watertown. Its hall was in the third story of the Iron block, over Mr. Prouty's shoe store, or in that neighborhood, and it was well filled. The

"league" was a secret society, whose object was to sustain our soldiers who had gone to the front, and by all laudable means assist in the prosecution of the war for the salvation of the Union. Of course, it embraced a very large majority of our citizens, for it took in all loyal persons, regardless of their political affiliations. I do not remember many of the persons who officiated at initiations—perhaps because I was at that time a new-comer here. The only individual I now recollect was the late Solon Massey, who held one of the more important offices, and was zealous in the work of the league. Leagues were organized in nearly every hamlet in the county, and a great deal of work performed that those outside knew nothing of. I remember assisting in the establishment of subordinate leagues at Adams Centre and Dexter.

And here I am reminded of the initiation of a distinguished military officer—no less a man than the late General John E. Wool—entirely against his wish, and in spite of his most earnest protestations that he could never join a secret society. The facts were communicated to me at the time by John M. Francis, editor of the Troy Times, and I am sure he will pardon the liberty I am taking in making them public.

The General met Mr. Francis one day, and inquired if our people were doing as much to help on the cause of the Union as they ought.

Mr. Francis replied that perhaps they were not; but he assured the General that the friends of the country were by no means idle. They were vigilant, and laboring to the best of their ability.

"But what are they doing?" inquired the General. "I do not discover any signs of activity and life. What is being done?"



Mr. Francis replied that the friends of the government were holding frequent meetings in —— hall, and doing their utmost to strengthen their hands.

“But I do not see anything of it,” said the General. “I should myself like to help in the work if I could be of service.”

Mr. Francis assured the General that it would afford him and his friends the greatest satisfaction to have him with them, and told him when the next meeting would occur, and that he would call at his house and go with him to the meeting. This proposition was assented to.

At the time appointed Mr. Francis called in fulfillment of his promise.

The General in the meantime had ascertained that the meeting he had promised to attend was a secret affair, and when Mr. Francis stopped for him he was told that the meeting was one that he could not attend; that he had never joined any secret organization, and he could not think of doing it now.

Mr. Francis told him that this was a state of things wholly unlooked for; that the secrets were of no account; that they were simply intended to exclude disloyal persons; that he had called in expectation of accompanying the General to the meeting; that it was generally understood that he was to be there, and that it would be a great disappointment to all if he could not attend.

The General, who was a great talker, put on his hat, took Mr. Francis' arm, and went with him toward the place where the league was in session, persisting all the while that he could not join the association. He had never belonged to any secret organization, and he could not be expected to do it at his time of life.

Arriving at the place of meeting, and entering the ante-room, the General was met by the secretary of the league, who was, of course, delighted to see him, and accosted him with the observation: “You are a friend



of the Union, General, of the prosecution of the war with the utmost vigor, and of employing all the resources at the command of the government for the suppression of the rebellion, &c., &c., to which the General replied, with emphasis :

“Of course I am.”

Whereupon the doors of the great hall were thrown open, and the General was lifted from his feet and conveyed to the platform, on which were the principal officers of the league, amidst the wildest enthusiasm and deafening cheers.

Once inside the General was quite at home, and I believe consented to give “the boys” an excellent talk, which was received in place of a set speech.

This is cited as a case worthy of record from the fact that it is the only one known where an individual has been admitted into a secret society without his knowledge or consent.

## CHAPTER XLVIII.

1863—Operations on the Mississippi River—Vicksburg Assailed and Finally Succumbs—Battle of Gettysburg—Political Notes—Union Cause Succeeds at Our State Election—Chauncey M. Depew—Local Matters.

Although the Union cause had made some progress during 1862, affairs were not in a very satisfactory condition at the commencement of the following year. While some inroads had been made upon the confederate government, it was clear that a great deal of hard work would have to be done before the concern could be overthrown. The loyal north had faith in the integrity and good intentions of the national administration, yet the feeling was very general with us that it lacked energy and vigor. It was thought that President Lincoln was too slow, and some of the Union generals were believed to be affected in the same way. They did not appear to be half as much in earnest as were the rebel officers. The latter were all fight, while our men appeared to be proceeding leisurely. The only thing the president had done that was heartily commended by the Union-loving men at the north was the issuing of the emancipation proclamation, which was to go into effect on the first of January, 1863. While everybody had faith in "Old Abe," as he was familiarly styled, less confidence was felt in the men around and under him. The result of the election in this state in 1862, whereby a thorough-going, out-and-out Union man was beaten, and Horatio Seymour, an amiable gentleman, but a democrat from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, and not supposed to be in full sympathy with the Union

cause, betrayed a want of confidence in the general administration, though other causes without doubt contributed to the defeat of General Wadsworth. So the outlook was far from being cheering at the beginning of the year 1863. A good many felt as though it was doubtful how the war might finally terminate.

It is true we had possession of the lower Mississippi, but that did not help us materially while so large a part of that stream was in the hands of the enemy. It was of the first importance to establish communication between our forces at New Orleans and those above Vicksburg, and repeated efforts were made to effect that result. General Grant finally determined to make a radical change in his plan of operations against Vicksburg. It was decided that this stronghold of the rebellion must be proceeded against from below the city. So preparations were made for running transports past the Vicksburg batteries. Two passed down in safety, but shortly after fell into the hands of the enemy. On the 25th of March, two rams ran the batteries, while six gunboats performed the same hazardous achievement on the night of April 16. Several other gunboats, laden with troops, also passed the batteries with little injury. From this time the main operations, both by our land and naval forces, were conducted below the city. An attack was made upon Port Gibson, which, after a short contest, fell into our hands, as did Grand Gulf. General Grant, after ordering Sherman to make a demonstration on Haines' Bluff to deceive the enemy, turned his attention to Jackson and Vicksburg. This advance, under McPherson, met the enemy, two brigades strong, on the same day, and, after several hours' hard fighting, drove them with heavy loss in killed, wounded and prisoners. Sherman and McPherson then moved upon Jackson, the capital of Mississippi, which was soon occupied by our forces. Hearing of our operations, Pemberton marched

out of Vicksburg, with his entire force, and prepared to attack our rear. He was met by our forces, and after being defeated in two or three severe engagements, and after the capture of Haines' and Chickasaw Bluffs, the rebels were driven into the city, and the work of investment formally commenced. The situation was not a pleasing one to the besieged, who made desperate efforts to drive us from our position, both from without and within, but we maintained our hold, and, after a siege lasting forty-seven days, the enemy surrendered.

This was one of the greatest achievements of the war, if not the most important. General Grant, in his official report, stated that the enemy had been defeated in five battles outside of Vicksburg; that our men had occupied Jackson and Vicksburg, its garrison and munitions of war; that we had captured 37,000 prisoners, among whom were fifteen general officers; at least 10,000 killed and wounded, (and among the killed Generals Tracy, Tighlman, and Green,) and arms and munitions of war sufficient for an army of 60,000 men. Of course, there was great rejoicing throughout the north over the fall of Vicksburg and the opening of the Mississippi river throughout its entire length; and as General Grant was recognized as the officer who planned and conducted the campaign, great credit was awarded him.

The fall of Vicksburg was followed by other engagements, in some of which important advantages were gained; in others, the gains were inconsiderable. The battle of Chancellorsville was fought by Joe Hooker, who achieved no laurels. After this the rebels turned up in Maryland, and the president issued a call for 100,000 men for six months to repel the invasion. New York furnished 25,000 men.

They next appeared in Pennsylvania, moving in the direction of Gettysburg. The Union forces, now commanded by General Meade, had business in that

part of the Keystone state, and promptly moved there, meeting Lee about the first of July, when what is known as the battle of Gettysburg, one of the severest engagements in the whole war, was fought. Although our losses were great, those of the enemy were greater, and the victory was on our side. Followed as it was by the fall of Vicksburg and Port Hudson, it caused profound gloom throughout the entire south, and Jeff Davis ordered a day of humiliation and prayer; while the north took new courage, and had faith that in the end the Union cause would triumph.

The battles of Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge were fought in the fall of this year, and both resulted in the success of the Union cause.

Were I writing a history of the war, of course I should mention a great number of smaller engagements, in which the rebels were now and then victorious, though in the aggregate we were making large gains. My purpose, however, is simply to inform the reader what was going on in 1863.

Political considerations did not enter largely into party movements in 1863. At least, this was true as to the republicans, who could fellowship anybody who preferred the success of the Union cause to that of the rebels. So their conventions were called as Union conventions, and they invited the co-operation of all desiring the maintenance of the Union. The Union state convention held this year nominated for secretary of state Chauncey M. Depew; comptroller, Lucius Robinson; treasurer, Geo. W. Schuyler; attorney general, John Cochrane; engineer and surveyor, Wm. B. Taylor; canal commissioner, B. F. Bruce; inspector of state prisons, James K. Bates. For the state senate, James A. Bell was renominated.

All these nominations were ratified by the people by very gratifying majorities, those for state officers by upwards of 30,000. In both branches of the legislature



there was a handsome majority of Union men ; therefore those persons who were so much discouraged and depressed by the defeat of Wadsworth and the election of Seymour the previous year were now in excellent spirits, and had great faith in the ultimate success of the cause of the country.

It will be noticed that the state ticket was headed by Chauncey M. Depew. He was designated by the state committee in place of Peter A. Porter of Niagara, who was the regular nominee of the convention, but declined to run, preferring not to abandon his post in the army. Mr. Depew was then a young man, and almost unknown outside of his own county, Westchester. It is true he had been in the assembly two winters, in 1862 and 1863, but he had acquired no particular distinction, probably because of his want of age and experience, though it is evident that he had made numerous friends, otherwise he would not have been given the nomination for secretary of state. But then the committee which made the nomination was not confident of success. Had it been some older man might have desired and obtained the place. It is, however, clear that the committee made a wise selection. There is no more brilliant man in the state than Mr. Depew, and, unlike most men of that type, he has no glaring weaknesses. It is but the simple truth to say that he is one of the best business men in the country, clear-headed, sound and practical, and thoroughly equipped for any position in which he may be placed.

In the winter and spring of 1863 there was an earnest movement in favor of the construction of a railroad from Oswego to Richland station, and a meeting was held in Pulaski in aid of the enterprise. I mention this fact in passing for the information of such of our citizens as may suppose that Watertown and Oswego have always been connected by rail.



In August of this year the county clerk's office was removed from Court street to the new court-house building on Arsenal street. Twenty-three years later (1886) Jefferson county was supplied with a new clerk's office, the one now in use.

August 26 the village of Watertown was visited by a severe tornado, which tore up trees, blew off roofs, turned over small houses, and upon Washington street, where the Y. M. D. Park now is, the gale picked up about thirty feet of plank sidewalk, and threw it with tremendous force upon the team of Abner Graves, breaking the leg of one of the horses and crushing the skull of the driver, John Hart, causing instant death. A brick house owned by John Golden, near the scene of the fatal accident, was blown down, and although the building was occupied by Mr. Golden's wife and five children, none of them were seriously injured. The tornado lasted but a few minutes, but did a great amount of damage.

In October a 400-pound black bear was shot by Samuel Fulton in Champion. There were many bears in this vicinity at that time, and much corn was destroyed by them.

In November 300,000 volunteers were called for by the general government, and the states notified that if that number was not obtained by the 5th of January, 1864, the men would be secured by draft.

December 2, Adams suffered very heavily from a large fire, which originated in the attic of the Saunders block.

Rev. Peter Snyder, pastor of the Second Presbyterian (now Stone street) church in Watertown, died December 31, 1863. Shortly afterward, Rev. Dr. Brayton, of the First church, resigned, thus leaving the pulpits of both Presbyterian churches vacant.

## CHAPTER XLIX.

Doings in 1864—The War—Grant in Command—The Battle of the Wilderness—Sheridan and Sherman at Work—Atlanta Captured—Sherman's March to the Sea—State, General and Local Notes—The Draft.

Comparative tranquility existed along our military lines during the first few weeks of the year 1864. It was, however, the quiet preceding the terrific and deadly struggle between the friends and the foes of the American government, and which culminated in the overthrow of the rebellion. On the 15th of March the president issued a call for 200,000 men for the volunteer service, and about the same time promulgated an order relieving General Halleck from the position of commanding general, and assigning Lieutenant General Grant to the command of the armies of the United States. The latter immediately addressed himself to the work of preparing for the spring and summer campaign. The army of the Potomac was reorganized, and arrangements for an early movement were made. This army consisted of three divisions, and three simultaneous movements were ordered—one by the way of James river, one up the Shenandoah valley, and one direct overland to Richmond. Preparations completed, the order to advance was given. The army broke camp Tuesday night, May 3, and crossed the Rapidan the next morning. This was followed immediately by the battle of the Wilderness, the most sanguinary battle of the war, and in which the loss of life on both sides was simply awful. It, however, decided the fate of the southern confederacy. Grant did not expect to defeat Lee's army without bloodshed ; he expected to

succeed, if he succeeded at all, after a life-and-death grapple, and considered that the time had arrived for ascertaining which of the two armies possessed the greatest amount of strength and endurance. Grant knew that the north had the most men and the most money, and he therefore proposed to attack Lee upon his own ground, relying upon the government to give him all the support he might require. He reasoned correctly. The struggle was a most determined one on both sides. The attack was commenced by Lee, who, apparently realizing that if dislodged from the position he had chosen it would be all day with him and his cause, fought through eight days with a ferocity bordering on despair. He was, however, worsted. The losses on both sides were frightfully heavy; nevertheless, the advantages were with the Union army. Lee was compelled to abandon his stronghold in "the Wilderness," while his position at Spottsylvania was at least critical. After a short rest, hostilities were renewed, this time by the federal forces. Fighting was kept up for a whole month and more, until Grant found himself in the vicinity of Richmond, but still unable to go there without too great a sacrifice of life, so he crossed to the south side of James river.

While the "battle of the Wilderness" was in progress, General Sheridan made a raid into the enemy's country, starting on the 9th of May. He destroyed an immense amount of supplies at Beaver Dam and at Ashland station, tore up sixteen miles of railway track, demolished over one hundred cars and several locomotives, captured the first line of works around Richmond, got near enough the city to see the gas lamps, fought several battles, in which he was invariably successful, completely severed Lee's communications with the rebel capital, and inflicted other great injuries on the enemy, and finally arrived in safety at Butler's camp on the James river.

Meantime, General Sherman was winning brilliant laurels in the southwest. His campaign against Atlanta ranks among the most remarkable in the annals of military history. It lasted from the beginning of May till the 2d of September, when that important stronghold fell into our hands.

Simultaneously with the capture of Atlanta, the country was gladdened with news from the Gulf. On the 5th of August Admiral Farragut, with fourteen gunboats and three monitors, passed between Forts Morgan and Gaines into Mobile bay, and, after several engagements, succeeded in getting possession of the last fort, Morgan, with 600 prisoners.

Later in the season Sheridan did some splendid fighting in the Shenandoah valley. Indeed, his achievements in that locality virtually ended the campaign in the Shenandoah, and left him "master of the situation."

Early in November General Sherman resolved upon one of the most daring acts in the history of military achievements. This was nothing less than to march boldly through the heart of the rebel confederacy, coming out on the Atlantic coast. The movement, which is known in history as Sherman's march to the sea, was eminently successful. His army traveled a distance of nearly 300 miles in less than four weeks, and without losing more than 1,500 men all told. He destroyed over 200 miles of railroad, took 4,000 prisoners, burnt and captured a vast amount of stores, collected 15,000 horses and mules, and had more supplies and more wagons and more stores when he arrived on the seaboard than when he started from Atlanta.

Two gentlemen who accompanied Sherman on this famous march—General H. W. Slocum and the late Major Moses Summers of Syracuse—related to me their personal experience, which I wish I might present to the reader in the graphic language it was given me. It

would be the most interesting article of this series. The general stated that the section of Georgia through which the army passed would have cause to remember the visit a long time. It overran forty-two counties and devastated a belt of country forty miles wide. "Those citizens who remained at home about their business were unmolested, but woe to those planters who were absent for any cause; their buildings were burned, and their personal effects carried off or destroyed." The major said it was not an uncommon thing to make bonfires at night of the carriages and other valuables that had been collected during the day. Arriving at Savannah, some of "the boys" proposed to celebrate, and consulted General Sherman on the subject. The general did not consider it necessary to make a great ado, but said there might be a house or two burned if that would satisfy.

In the meantime General Grant had taken his position in front of Petersburg, and proposed to remain there until he could get possession of the capital of the southern confederacy, and so put an end to the rebellion.

On the 1st of January, 1864, Henry R. Selden took his seat on the bench as judge of the court of appeals, and Henry A. Foster as justice of the supreme court, in this judicial district.

In 1864 Jefferson county was represented in the assembly by George M. Hopkinson, Lewis Palmer and William Dewey; St. Lawrence, by George Parker, James Redington and A. X. Parker; Oswego, by A. C. Mattoon, Hiram W. Loomis and Harvey Palmer; Lewis, by John O'Donnell.

Thomas Starr King died in San Francisco, March 4, 1864. He was born in New York December 16, 1824, and was the son of Rev. Thomas Farrington King, a Universalist minister of Charlestown, Mass. He was a great and eloquent orator, preacher and writer.



General James S. Wadsworth was killed in the "battle of the Wilderness," May 6, 1864.

Joshua Dewey, aged 97 years, died on February 24, 1864, in Watertown. He was James Fennimore Cooper's tutor, instructing him in the alphabet, and was a member of the assembly from Otsego county in 1798 and 1799, and was of the class of 1787 at Yale college.

Vincent Leray de Chaumont, his son and grandson, visited the village of Carthage the 14th of July, their last visit in this county. They used to live at Le Raysville.

John Fayel, for several years one of the editors and publishers of the Northern New York Journal, issued in Watertown, and a vigorous writer, died at Saratoga Springs the 12th of July. He was a brother of Joseph Fayel of Theresa and William Fayel of St. Louis.

The "draft period," in our section, was one of much solicitude on the part of many who were liable to do military duty. Captain Fred Emerson was provost marshal, and he made a most painstaking and efficient officer. His duties were delicate and important, and through all the details of his trying position he won the confidence and esteem of our people for his ability and impartiality. The work of enrolling the names of all who were subject to the draft was difficult and trying, and the actual drafting operations were deeply interesting to all whom it concerned. A draft was made in Watertown June 6, 1864. The "revolving wheel" used in selecting the names from each town is now doing duty in the county clerk's office in drawing the list of jurors, and was made under the supervision of E. B. Wynn, Esq. Strangely enough, its designer was among the victims drawn from its capacious depths later on. It now belongs to the Jefferson County Historical Society. During the latter part of 1864 great efforts were put forth to fill the quotas



of the various towns in the twentieth congressional district, comprising the counties of Lewis, Herkimer and Jefferson, by paying bounties to volunteers. These commenced at \$300, and rapidly rose, until as high as \$1,500 was paid for a substitute. The draft touched the pockets of many men, who, when drafted, found it more agreeable to "fork out" the cash than to fight. It was easy to shout for the war, but fighting in the ranks was quite another matter. Of course, those who furnished substitutes did all the government asked of them, and were fully entitled to credit for the action taken. Situated as we were, near the border line, a good many came from Canada to enlist as substitutes, and then desert. Watertown soon became noted as a poor place to practice this kind of thing, for the vigilance of Captain Emerson's force rendered desertions both dangerous and difficult.

It was during this year that many British soldiers stationed at Kingston deserted and came to Watertown to enlist. One day nearly a dozen of these soldiers, dressed in their red uniforms, appeared in our streets, and marched to the provost marshal's office, to enlist in our army, in a body.

The files of the daily paper abound in references to enlistments, public meetings and appeals to town committees to work zealously, so as to fill the quotas at this time, and thus prevent "the draft." As a rule, most of the towns furnished substitutes for the drafted men, and comparatively few were forced to go to the front. Volunteering under the stimulating influence of high bounties mainly brought forth enough to fill the official demand made upon our district for recruits. The record of Jefferson county was a proud one during all the dark and trying days of the war of the great rebellion.

There was some dissatisfaction with the administration of President Lincoln all through 1863, and early in 1864 there was a movement in favor of some individual in whom there was more fight. There were those who thought General Fremont, the republican standard-bearer in 1856, had not been fairly treated by the authorities in Washington, and were inclined to rally around him again. These and others of the disaffected held a convention in Cleveland, and nominated Fremont for president, and John Cochrane for vice president. The great body of Union men, however, thought it best to stand by Mr. Lincoln, agreeing with him that it would not be wise policy to swap horses while crossing a stream. The war had been commenced with Mr. Lincoln at the head of the government, and most loyal men judged he should be allowed to prosecute it to the end. Accordingly, when the national convention assembled in June, the delegates were substantially a unit in favor of Mr. Lincoln's renomination. The vote stood, for Lincoln 497; for Grant 22, (the Missouri delegation.) Andrew Johnson was nominated for vice president. He had been loyal to the Union throughout, and it was thought best to give him the nomination. Perhaps the convention acted wisely in exchanging the sterling patriot, Hannibal Hamlin, for the windy Andy Johnson, and perhaps it didn't.

Henry J. Raymond, the founder of the New York Times, was the leading spirit in this convention, and drafted and read the resolutions, which were admirable, of course. There were few men in the country who could write better resolutions or make a better speech than Mr. Raymond.

Our state convention, held in September, nominated Reuben E. Fenton for governor, and Thomas G. Alvord for lieutenant. For canal commissioner F. A. Alberger of Buffalo was named, and for state prison inspector

David P. Forrest of Schenectady. The nominees for presidential electors (at large) were Horace Greeley and Preston King, and for this congressional district, John Clarke.

The congressional nominee for the district was A. H. Laflin.

All these nominees were chosen by good majorities. Lincoln's majority over McClellan, the democratic nominee for the presidency, was 457,342 ; Fenton's over Seymour, 7,293.

## CHAPTER L.

An Eventful Year—The War Closed—Lincoln Murdered—What Will the Nation Do—Local Notes—Mortuary.

The year 1865 opened with operations against Fort Fisher, which was captured about the middle of January. This was followed by the taking of Fort Caswell and all the fortifications commanding the channels of Cape Fear river, when the rebels rapidly retreated toward Wilmington, N. C., vigorously followed by our land and naval forces. Meantime Sherman was dealing crushing blows to the rebellion in South Carolina, tearing up her principal railroads, burning bridges, and destroying large amounts of private property. About the middle of February the Union forces reached Columbia, the capital of the state, which was badly scorched through the folly of Wade Hampton, who commanded the rebels at that point. Leaving Columbia, General Sherman paid his respects to North Carolina, and gained several important victories in that state. The operations of Sherman rendered Charleston, the "cradle of secession," untenable, and it was evacuated by the chivalry. On the 18th of February, a little more than four years from the time the standard of revolt was raised and South Carolina proclaimed herself out of the Union, the rebel leaders deserted Charleston, and abandoned the fortifications, when our forces hastened to take possession. The federal flag was immediately hoisted over Fort Sumter by a detachment of colored troops, while Fort Moultrie and the works on James Island were similarly occupied. About this time Sheridan made one of his famous raids through northern Virginia, destroying

numerous bridges, mills and manufactories, many miles of railroad track, and much other property, public and private. Indeed, this raid went far toward making Richmond untenable.

At length the long inactivity in front of Petersburg was broken. Lee discovered that he could remain idle no longer. On the 25th of March he suddenly attacked our army south of Appomattox, bringing his forces to bear against the weakest point of our long line, which he hoped to break, and thus compel Grant to raise the siege. In this attempt he was to a limited extent successful; but the advantages gained were of no importance. Grant immediately assumed the offensive, and was thereafter victorious in every battle. It becoming apparent to Lee that he could not hold Richmond, he sought to establish a new "base" at a more southerly point. This Grant determined to prevent, and put all his forces in motion. A number of severe engagements were fought, and though not uniformly successful, for the rebels fought with desperation, the aggregate results all pointed one way, to the speedy overthrow of the rebellion.

On the 2d of April Grant ordered an attack on the whole line in front of Petersburg. At 4 o'clock the signal was given, and our men advanced quietly and in perfect order, with fixed bayonets. That they went to stay was indicated by their being accompanied by a detachment of heavy artillery, prepared to turn and work the enemy's guns. Presently musketry was heard, and the rebel picket line was reached; now a hearty cheer, followed by the roar of musketry. The cheering and musketry firing was taken up, and ran along to the left until it was lost in the distance. The artillery on both sides was at work, and 200 big guns belched forth their thunder; but the work was quickly done. Orders were given to "Charge bayonets! double quick!" and away our

boys went over breastworks, rifle-pits and other obstructions, into the main works, and the deed was accomplished. For one moment the rebels looked thunder-struck, and then took to flight. But our boys were too quick for all of them, and captured 250. The guns in the fort were quickly trained and set at work on the enemy. This, with simultaneous operations to the left, cut the rebel lines in two. But this was not the end of the contest. The rebels made four attempts during the day to retake the important position, but all to no purpose. Each time they were sent reeling back in disorder, losing heavily. In other places the rebel lines were severed. Soon our troops occupied the entire line of rebel entrenchments, from the Appomattox above Petersburg to the river below. The rebels hastily evacuated Petersburg, and it was immediately occupied by the national forces. Lee telegraphed Jeff. Davis that all was lost. This was on Sunday afternoon, and Davis was in church; but he immediately prepared to leave the city, and before night he and his cabinet had departed, taking with them the "government" archives and such specie as they were able to collect from the banks. The next day General Weitzel entered Richmond and took possession; but not till General Ewell had attempted to destroy it by fire.

Meanwhile Lee was rapidly retreating southward, with the evident intention of establishing a new "base" in southwestern Virginia or North Carolina. Grant had taken steps to frustrate this. Sheridan, with his cavalry, had been sent to "head off" the rebel army in its advance, and Meade to attack him in the rear. The second and sixth corps struck the rebels near Deatonville. A sharp conflict followed, resulting in the defeat of the secesh, and the capture of several thousand prisoners, including Generals Ewell, Kershaw and Custis Lee. Lee's position was now desperate. He had lost more



than half his army, with the remainder of his troops utterly demoralized. General Grant, having arrived at the front, addressed, on the 7th of April, the following note to Lee :

“General: The result of the last week must convince you of the hopelessness of further resistance, on the part of the army of northern Virginia, in this struggle. I feel that it is so, and regard it as my duty to shift from myself the responsibility of any further effusion of blood, by asking of you the surrender of that portion of the C. S. army known as the army of northern Virginia.”

Lee replied that while he did not entirely agree with General Grant as to the “hopelessness” of his position, he reciprocated the desire to avoid the useless effusion of blood, and asked the terms which would be offered on condition of surrender.

These were given, and two days after accepted, and this ended the war of the rebellion so far as Lee was concerned.

General Johnson, who was in North Carolina, and pursued by the forces under General Sherman, surrendered shortly afterward, on terms similar to those offered to Lee. About the same time Mobile, Montgomery, Selma and other important places in Alabama fell into our hands, leaving only a small force under Kirby Smith in Texas still defiant. On the 26th of May the surrender of his command was consummated, and thus the last rebel army ceased to exist.

On the evening of April 14th, President Lincoln, while sitting in a private box in Ford's theatre, was shot in the back of the head, by an actor named J. Wilkes Booth. He lingered in an unconscious condition until 7 o'clock the next morning, when he expired. Secretary Seward and his son Frederick were assaulted at their residences about the same time, and both left for dead. Fortunately the assassin did not complete his work. The people of the north were intensely exasperated. The south was charged with the responsibility of the

hellish act, and a cry for vengeance was raised. But the government, influenced by the same spirit of forbearance which had characterized it all through the terrible conflict, declined to yield to the popular cry for blood, contenting itself for the time with the trial and execution of the immediate authors of the assassination.

Even the infamous wretch, Jeff. Davis, president of the so-called southern confederacy, who, more than any other single individual, was responsible for the war and its untold horrors and sufferings, and which cost the country more than a million of lives, every one of which was more valuable than that of Davis, was allowed to go unpunished, though if he had his deserts according to the statute of Moses, he should have been killed by some slow process, by which he would have been a quarter of a century dying. I really think Davis the meanest, most despicable, most brutal monster in the entire southern states. In his character was concentrated everything that is black and devilish. He was both a demon and an ingrate; for he never manifested the least gratitude toward those generous souls, Horace Greeley and Gerrit Smith, who volunteered to become his bail that he might be released from confinement; and he died as full of bitterness and hate toward those who spared his worthless life as he was when he allowed the boys in blue to starve and rot in prison within sight of his official residence in Richmond. He was captured by some of our boys from Wisconsin and Michigan, as he was emerging from a tent, dressed in the guise of an old woman. A good many have never quite forgiven his captors for not treating this despicable creature according to the famous order of General Dix, which is so well remembered that I need not repeat it.

I heard of the assassination of Lincoln just after sitting down to breakfast at the Delavan, at Albany, being at the capital in the capacity of private secretary to

Governor Fenton. There had been some unruly doings in the assembly the previous evening. I don't remember what the trouble was about, and now only recollect that Satan himself appeared to be at large, and I had remained there to see the thing out. As I was taking up the bill of fare, Senator Stanford of Schenectady, who was seated next to me, observed, "Well, what will the country do now?" Supposing the remark referred to what had been going on in the assembly chamber the previous evening, I replied, "I guess it will survive." When he said, "Do you know that Lincoln was shot last night, and that Mr. Seward and his son were assassinated, and that all three are probably now dead?" No words can describe the effect of the shocking intelligence, and, casting my eyes around the room, I saw a hundred persons wearing serious faces and speechless. The news had struck all dumb. Following so closely the surrender of Lee and the triumph of the Union cause, which had lifted a great burden from all hearts and imparted to every countenance a jubilant appearance, the revulsion in the general feeling was simply indescribable.

"What will the country do now?" was the natural inquiry in all minds. The people had just begun to appreciate the services of Abraham Lincoln; had just commenced to understand the real character of the man, his devotion to his country, his unselfishness, his love for humanity, his unswerving integrity, his adherence to justice and the right. Loyal men were coming to regard him as the saviour of our government. There was a feeling that the best man in the nation had been shot down, and there were few who did not regard the appalling deed as in a measure an outrage upon himself.

In a short time the intelligence was flashed over the wires that the president was dead. Mr. Seward and his

son were still alive, but it was too early to say what the result of their injuries might be.

"What will the country now do?" was asked by every man you met during the day, while you read in his countenance the utmost anxiety and the gravest apprehensions. Most people were very sad, some were exceedingly indignant and bitter, and others asserted that no mercy should now be shown to the rebels. The day that Lincoln died was one of intense excitement throughout the entire north. For one day free speech was interdicted in the free states. It was not safe to speak disparagingly of Mr. Lincoln. In a few instances democrats of the copperhead species, giving vent to their ill-feelings, were set upon by the populace, and compelled to flee for safety from the fury of the mob. Gradually, however, reason resumed sway, and the patriotic citizens calmly considered the question, "What will the country now do?"

Of course, there was nothing to be done but to submit to the decrees of Providence and make the best of things. The life of the nation did not depend upon the life of one man, one hundred or one thousand men; rather upon the character of the men who were still living. The masses were still true to the principles upon which the government rested, and while this was true the country was in no danger.

A few days later the remains of the president were brought to Albany, and placed in the assembly chamber of the old capitol. They remained there an entire day, and many thousands went there to look upon the features of the murdered president. I confess that I had no desire to see them. I never saw Abraham Lincoln alive, and I did not care to see him after the pure spirit that had animated his countenance had fled. The pictures of Lincoln all bear a striking resemblance. While they have something of the sad look his face is said to

have worn, they still afford some index to his real character, and a view of these bring pleasanter reflections than a glimpse at his ghastly features lying in state would have left on my mind.

On the death of Mr. Lincoln, Andrew Johnson became president, and discharged the duties of the office nearly four years. With some good traits—for he was unquestionably loyal to the Union—he had almost no qualifications fitting him for chief magistrate of the American republic. And yet I have always been glad he was at the head of the nation, and at a very critical period; for everybody, both in this country and abroad, should be satisfied by his administration that it makes little difference who may temporarily occupy the white-house. A headstrong, ungovernable, and even vicious man in the presidential chair may annoy and try the popular patience, but he can do no real injury. *The people rule.*

In 1865 Jefferson county was represented in the senate by James A. Bell, and in the assembly by James G. Kellogg, Lewis Palmer and R. B. Biddlecom; St. Lawrence, in the senate by Albert Hobbs, and in the assembly by George Parker, James Redington and Daniel Shaw; Oswego, senate by Cheney Ames, assembly by Elias Root, Richard K. Sanford and Avery W. Severance; Lewis, by Nathan Clark.

John Clarke, one of Watertown's oldest and ablest lawyers, died April 12. He was a native of Saybrook, Conn., and came to Watertown at an early day. He was at one time surrogate of the county, and presidential elector in 1864. Charles E. Clarke, who represented Jefferson county in the assembly two terms and the Jefferson district in congress one, was his brother.

On the 20th of April funeral exercises and observances took place in Watertown, commemorative of President Lincoln. An eulogy was delivered by Hon. Joseph Mullin. General Tilly R. Pratt was marshal of



the day. Hon. Charles B. Hoard was chairman of the committee on ceremonies.

June 8, a grand reception was given to the 186th regiment, returning from the war. A speech of welcome was delivered by S. H. Hammond. Breakfast was served in Washington hall.

On the 4th of July there was a great celebration in Watertown. An oration was delivered by Hon. Lyman Tremaine of Albany. The Kingston fire department was present.

The initial movement was made to connect Watertown with Carthage by rail. It was started by a large meeting in Washington hall October 3. Hon. James A. Bell, Hon. James F. Starbuck, L. Ingalls, and others spoke ; and a committee, of which Hon. Joseph Mullin was chairman, was appointed to carry out the objects of the meeting.

On the 12th of November Hon. Preston King committed suicide by drowning.

Edward Everett died January 15, 1865.

Thomas Corwin, a well-known campaign orator in Ohio, whilom governor of that state, and afterwards U. S. senator, died at Washington on the 17th of December, in the same year.



## CHAPTER LI.

New York State During the War—Differences Between the State and National Governments in Regard to the State's Quota Under the Draft—President Lincoln's Part in Settling It.

In the winter of 1864-5 there were several calls for men from the war department at Washington to fill the New York regiments that had been depleted by the three-and-a-half years' war for the Union. One was issued in December for 61,000 men. It being considered excessive by the authorities at Albany, Governor Fenton and General Palmer, of his military staff, went to see if a reduction in the number asked for could not be obtained.

The governor was unable to make any impression upon Secretary Stanton, who was more than firm. He was rigid in adhering to the allotment for New York as then made. Not doubting the right and justice of his claim for a reduction and a re-assignment as to the districts, the governor called on Mr. Lincoln, who listened attentively and patiently to all he had to say. At the close the president remarked: "I guess you have the best of it, and I must advise Stanton and Fry to ease up a little." He wrote upon a card to Mr. Stanton, and gave it to the governor to carry to him, the following:

"The governor has a pretty good case. I feel sure he is more than half right. We don't want him to feel cross and we in the wrong. Try and fix it with him.

A. LINCOLN."

The result was, the quota, as finally arranged, was fully 9,000 less, and the equality between the several districts was in a great measure restored.

There was subsequently another call of the same kind, and it being made before the quota above referred to was filled, it was beginning to be a question whether the men could be found. Indeed, it was known that there were districts that had sent forward every man who was duly qualified for the service. The trouble lay in the fact that one week there was a requisition for 47,000 men, and shortly afterward a demand for 62,000. Our friends at the state capital could not understand that, and the legislature appointed a committee, consisting of two senators and three members of assembly to visit Washington, obtain an explanation, and, if possible, a reduction in the number of men asked for. I do not remember the names of all the assemblymen; I only know that Thomas B. Van Buren of New York was one of them, and that the senators were James A. Bell of this district and George H. Andrews of the Otsego district.

The committee went to Washington, and at the earliest opportunity called on the secretary of war. Mr. Van Buren desired to present the case to Secretary Stanton, and his colleagues assented to the proposition. He was a man who prided himself on his capacity for making a fine speech, and on this occasion he intended to and did spread himself considerably.

Before he was half through the great war secretary became uneasy, and told him he knew all about the difficulties in New York, that they were always wanting something in that state, that they had more grievances than all the other states, and that to listen to them would be a waste of time. He frankly and bluntly told the committee that their wishes could not be complied with.

"The men are all needed," he said, "to replenish the armies, and the government *must* have them."

"But suppose they cannot be obtained," said Mr. Van Buren.

"Don't you tell me they can't be obtained," answered Secretary Stanton, in a firm and measured voice. "I will find a way to get them."

"Well, Mr. Secretary, if you will not grant us relief, nor even hear us, we shall have to go to the president." And thus saying, the committee, who had not been asked to take seats, bade the secretary good day, and were about leaving the room, when, following them to the door, Mr. Stanton said to Mr. Bell: "What do you gentlemen want?"

That gentleman told him that the committee had been trying to tell him, and reiterated the points in the case.

They were told that they could see the president, of course. "But I say to you," said the secretary, "we must have the men. I could not grant your request if I would, and I would not if I could."

The secretary was decidedly gruff, and the committee left him with no very high opinion of his courtesy. They did not consider that they had been civilly treated. They were not asked to repeat the call.

They subsequently called on the president, who received them kindly, patiently listened to what they had to say, and, while assuring the committee that the men were sorely needed, was a good deal more reasonable than the secretary of war. "If there are not men enough in the district to fill the quota, of course it cannot be filled there," were the president's words.

He said he would see Mr. Stanton, and proposed that the committee should come to the white house in the evening of the day following. By this time General Fry, the provost marshal general, having been sent for, had entered the room. The president questioned him as to the discrepancy in the two allotments for New York state, 47,000 and 62,000 having been figured out under

the same call for men. "I made a mistake in the 47,000," answered General Fry. "But are you now sure," asked Mr. Lincoln, "that you have not made a mistake in the 62,000?" This seemed rather to confuse the provost marshal general, and in a few words it was arranged that the committee should go with him to his office, and see what discoveries could be made as to the manner of making up the quotas for the different states and districts. Some members of the committee intimated that not much faith was reposed in General Fry, but the president guessed he would be found disposed to do what would be right in the case, and commended him to their confidence.

So the committee proceeded to his office, told their errand, when General Fry sent for his great mathematician, who undertook to enlighten the committee as to the manner of doing business in that department. The committee desired to understand why it was that New York had been asked to furnish 47,000 men one day and 62,000 shortly afterward. The great mathematician took up his pencil and began to make figures, and so did the committee, and, as they proceeded, they now and then threw in a question.

"By the time he had been before us half an hour," says Mr. Bell, "he became so mixed up and confused that he was unable to determine with any degree of certainty that two and two would make four." As a matter of fact, he was wholly unable to give a reason for raising the figures from 47,000 to 62,000, and the committee left the office in as much darkness as they had entered it.

A majority of the committee, offended with the reception given them by the secretary of war, and despairing of obtaining the relief desired, returned to Albany. But Mr. Bell remained, as did Senator Andrews.

These gentlemen met at the white-house, pursuant to the president's invitation. Secretary Stanton was there, and, as the two gentlemen entered, he exclaimed :

"Where are the rest of the New York committee? When that state sends a delegation here a whole platoon comes. Where is the man that gave the stump speech?"

He was told that the other members of the committee had departed, which appeared to afford him great relief. He had a great horror of stump speeches that had been repeated over and over again in some political campaign.

Messrs. Bell and Andrews were asked to be seated, when Mr. Lincoln, occupying a chair, one arm of which was a writing desk, took up a piece of blotting paper about six inches long by four in width, and wrote the following as New York's grievance. A part of the document was written with a black pencil, and the rest in blue. It covered one side of the sheet of paper, and four lines were written on the back. Mr. Bell preserved and brought home the piece of paper, and I presume still has it. He loaned it to me, and I had a copy made. This is it :

"The draft matter complained of by Governor Fenton is this: That in giving credits for past calls, *one three-years' man* is counted equal to *three one-year's men*, while on the pending call each man is counted *one*, and *only one*, whether he enlists for one, two or three years. The practical difficulty may be illustrated by the following supposed case: The towns of A and B, before any enlisted, have each 100 men. On the late call A gave 66 *one-year men*, leaving only 34 at home, while B gave 33 *three-years' men*, leaving 67 at home; on the pending call each owes 100 men, subject to its credit, but while A gets credit for 66 it owes 34, taking the last man in it, while B gets credit for 99, owes one, and has 66 left quietly at home. This ugly conjuncture occurs in some sort accidentally, some towns putting in *one-year's men*, and others *three-years' men*, attaching no consequence to this difference, but which now burdens the one class beyond their immediate power to bear. While the above is only a supposed case, I am told there are real ones that are even stronger, where there are not men enough in the town to answer its quota. It gives no present relief that the *one-year men* are to come home sooner than the *three-years' men*, as the present call does not wait until they come."



Up to this time it had not been an easy matter to state the precise difficulty under which our state labored. Mr. Lincoln made the case so clear that the most ordinary mind could comprehend it. The truth was, so much had been done in the sending of short-term men to the war, from some localities, that there were no men left to respond. For that reason the number mentioned in the first call (47,000) was much preferred to a larger one.

It may be stated here, parenthetically, that about this time it was currently reported that there were good numbers of colored men to be had at the south, and a large number of commissions were issued from the executive department at Albany for their enlistment; but so far as I know, few were ever obtained.

The committee desired to get rid of raising the number of men called for under the amended call—62,000. The authorities of the state were willing to undertake to raise three-quarters of the number, but it was not clear to them how the whole were to be obtained. The war department would not consent to release the state from securing the larger number, "for," said Mr. Lincoln, "we shall have all the other states here in twenty-four hours, begging the same favor."

After a full discussion, it was settled that the committee should call the next morning and obtain the decision of the war office.

At the appointed hour Mr. Bell and his colleague repaired to the white-house. The president met them, but his countenance wore an inexpressibly sad look. It was the morning on which the president, Secretary Seward and one or two other government officials were to meet Vice President Stephens of the confederacy, with Judah P. Benjamin and one or two others on the confederate side, on the James river, and the president was dressed for the journey. Being asked what he thought



would be the outcome of it, he replied, "Probably nothing."

Addressing Mr. Bell, the president said: "Suppose *you* were in my place, and I should come here from the state of New York making the request you are making, with the war yet unfinished, and the ranks badly thinned; what would *you* do?" Mr. Bell confessed that this was about the most troublesome conundrum that was ever put to him, and he did not reply.

The president then told him that the authorities had decided to allow New York to put in three-fourths of the men called for, and that the other fourth might stand for the present. "But," said the president, "we must have *men*. Mr. Stanton tells me your state has a way of making up part of her quotas with *paper* men."

"Paper men?" queried Mr. Bell; "why, what does he mean by *paper* men?"

The president answered, in substance, like this: "Well, you have a way in New York state of procuring the number of men shipped in the navy at New York, and at Buffalo and at Oswego, and getting them credited to you on your allotment under the next call for the army. This time we must have no paper men; we want *men in boots*." He then handed Mr. Bell or Mr. Andrews a folded paper enclosing another paper, the outside one having written on it:

"Grant the within request if not incompatible with the exigencies of the service.

A. LINCOLN."

They were to present these at the war department. They took their final leave of President Lincoln, and were soon before Secretary Stanton again.

"Yes, you have won the point," remarked Mr. Stanton. Then, glancing at the outside paper, he said: "Oh, there's nothing incompatible with it; nothing incompatible; but we need all the men."

Thus it was that the draft was postponed in respect to one-fourth of the men called for. This was satisfactory to the committee, and they returned to Albany. But before all was in readiness for making the draft, and before any considerable number of men were raised, the rebellion collapsed, and there was general rejoicing throughout the north, not only on the account of the close of the war, but also because there were to be no more drafts to worry the people.

## CHAPTER LII.

Governor Fenton—His Peculiar Traits of Character Explained—His Official Manner and Acts.

Probably I knew Reuben E. Fenton as well as the majority of those who called themselves his friends ; yet I do not doubt there were those who knew him better than I did. I think Galusha A. Grow of Pennsylvania knew him as well as any one, but I have never had an opportunity to compare opinions with the ex-speaker. I do not myself pretend to read character at sight. It is necessary that I should see a good deal of a man before I can decide in my own mind just what there is of him. This at least is true as to many persons. I know there are those who are easily read—frank, ingenuous, outspoken people, who tell you what they think, and whose utterances are a fair index to their character. But there are others who rarely enlighten you as to what is going on in their minds. They open up to you as far as they consider it important that you should understand, and no farther.

Governor Fenton perhaps knew as many persons in this state as any man in it, and most of those who were known by him supposed they knew him quite well ; yet not one in a thousand of them knew him at all ; at least, it is safe to say that they did not enjoy his confidence to any extent. Martin Van Buren was always an enigma ; his friends did not pretend to understand him very thoroughly, while his enemies characterized him as the “little magician ;” he operated in a way peculiarly his own ; few understood what he was doing until they wit-

nessed the results, and these were achieved so noiselessly, and with so little flourish, that even his friends were taken by surprise. Governor Fenton in some respects resembled Mr. Van Buren. He no doubt had confidential friends, but they were few in number. I have sometimes thought that he had barely one, to wit: Reuben E. Fenton. And I judge this was true as to many of his plans and purposes. He was always free to give you what appeared to be his convictions, but it was not safe to assume that you had understood him rightly until you had found out how he would act, and this you might not learn until you had seen him act. In ordinary intercourse you did not discover that he was particularly secretive. He was not at all reticent; yet it is entirely certain that he imparted to you only such information as he wished you to have. He kept his own counsels better than any man I ever knew. Many thought he was unreliable. That was because they did not understand the man. They acquainted him with their sentiments and wishes, and because he did not expressly non-concur and declare his own position, they understood him to agree with them, when they knew no more of his thoughts and real purposes than if he had remained silent. The governor liked to please, and wanted to be thought well of. He was one of the most affable men the state has ever produced. He took so much pains to speak to everybody, and to speak kind words, that those who did not know the man wondered if there was not in all this a great deal of affectation. Such have only to be reminded that urbanity was a part of his nature. He was a mannerly boy, polite and courteous when a student at law, a gentleman when lumbering on the Alleghany river, civil and obliging as a merchant; in truth, he was a gentleman in all the relations of life, born so, and he could no more be uncivil, no more treat any person unkindly than a Christian woman

could indulge in profanity. He was a clean man, clean in his outward appearance, clean inside as well. Unpolished boots and unbrushed clothes and hat would have been esteemed as much out of place in his own dwelling, or in the streets of the town where he lived, or in his office, as they would have been at a party in Albany or Washington. Few persons ever saw Governor Fenton with unkempt hair or unshaven face. He was as particular as to his personal appearance as Mr. Greeley was careless. I mention this to show the character of the man. He wished to be respectable in appearance, and he intended that all his acts should correspond. He was a singularly pure man. He has one of the cleanest records ever made by a man in public life twenty years. It is well-nigh faultless. When he was in congress he was always in his seat, always careful to go upon record, and his name stands upon the right side of every question acted upon. His first speech in congress was in favor of cheapening postage, and his second was against Douglas' Nebraska-Kansas bill, and it was the first delivered in the national legislature on that side of the question.

Governor Fenton was not an angular man, but whoever supposes he was wanting in positive qualities did not know him. He was as positive as Governor Dix, though wholly unlike him; the latter was governed by impulse, the former by reason and judgment. Governor Fenton would listen to all you had to say, and apparently agree with you, but when he came to act it would be upon *his own* convictions. You would then learn, and perhaps for the first time, the precise position which he occupied. He was a man who acted upon his own judgment, and not upon that of another; hence he was usually, if not always, right. He was steadfastly opposed to increasing the fare on the New York Central railroad. Considering the superior advantages its location gives it, the ease of

its grade, and that a large portion of the travel and freight between the east and west is likely to pass over it for all time, he deemed two cents a mile for passengers a liberal rate of fare, and could see no good reason for raising it. He declined to approve two bills which came before him, making the fare two and one-half cents per mile instead of two. But the managers of the road were not yet fully satisfied that he was irreconcilably against their project. They held interviews with him, and sent others to do it. The governor listened to them all patiently, heard and carefully weighed all the reasons urged in favor of an increase of the tariff, and as he did not combat their positions, not considering it any part of his duty to instruct the law-making branch of the government as to what it should or should not do, the officers of the road at length decided to make a third and final effort to obtain the desired increase. They captured nearly every man in the state supposed to have influence with the governor, enlisted in their support most if not all his staff, and fixed the newspaper press. The kind-hearted Mr. Greeley, who had always fought an increase of fare, came to Albany, at the desire of Dean Richmond, and told the governor that, as he understood the matter, the "relief" asked for by the road appeared to be only an act of justice. In a word, there was no limit to the pressure brought to bear upon the governor to make it easy for him to sign the bill.

After it had reached the executive chamber I came up home to spend Sunday, returning on Monday afternoon. Entering the executive chamber upon my arrival at the capitol, his eyes lighted upon me, and, beckoning me to him, he said: "Go down with me to lunch; I want to talk with you a few minutes."

We walked down to his house, then at the head of State street, together, and, after a light dinner, we went into the parlor, where I took a seat upon a sofa, while



the governor, having lighted a cigar in a very deliberate manner, began walking the room. He was silent for a few moments, but shortly after halted before me, and inquired :

“What do your people in Jefferson county think of the bill for increasing the fare on the Central road?”

I replied : “They are all in favor of cheap fair, of course. No man cheerfully pays two and a half cents per mile for being transported by rail if he can ride for two.”

Then I began telling him that the claim was, that the road was earning less money than it should, considering the superiority of its accommodations.

He interrupted me by saying :

“Brockway, this is the old contest between those who have large wealth and those who have little ; in a word, between the money power and the people. Thus far in my public life, I have stood by the people, and they have stood by me ; so help me, heaven, I will not desert them now. I am going to veto the Central fare bill.”

And the veto was sent in that evening.

This put an end to the business of trying to obtain higher fare.

Of course, the governor might have made known his views and purposes in advance of the action of the legislature, and saved the road officials a world of trouble and some money ; but that was not his style. He thought the legislature should attend to its own affairs, and leave him to look after his own.

His action was a great disappointment to nearly everybody at the state capital and outside, and he was strongly censured by many, who charged that he had not acted in good faith. But no one pretended he had ever intimated that he would sign the bill, and had such a pretense been set up, any one knowing the governor would be certain that he had been misrepresented or

misunderstood. It would not have comported with his ideas of official propriety and the dignity of his position to notify the legislature, or any person interested in measures pending therein, as to what his action in a given case would be, before it had come to him in the regular way.

Governor Fenton was not the type of man I fancy, yet we were always warm friends. He was too reserved. I like a man who, when a square question is addressed him, will give a square answer. I like perfect frankness. If you made a request of Vice President Wheeler, he would tell you in one moment whether he could or could not grant it. And he would do it without giving the least offense. You were charmed with his straightforwardness. You knew what he said came from the the heart, and were satisfied. Governor Fenton was far less explicit. He was a politician, and his utterances were those of a politician. You were not always certain that you had caught the exact import of his words. As I have already stated, he wanted to please every one. He thought the good-will of a worthless fellow was preferable to his ill-will, and generally had it. He desired the good opinion of everybody. While he did not care to have unworthy people very near him, he was careful not to repel them. To my apprehension this was a weakness, but it was a part of his nature, and may very well be pardoned. I know he had a kind heart. He had a good word for every one, and delighted in making all happy. It was an exceedingly difficult thing for him to say no when a favor was solicited. If pecuniary aid was asked it was not in his power to refuse. After the war closed, and our boys were returning home, in 1865, large numbers of them called on the governor, and many were in destitute circumstances. Not one was ever sent empty away. For weeks there was hardly a day when there were not considerable amounts disbursed in this

manner, and there was never any account made of it. Governor Fenton gave freely and cheerfully, and not grudgingly. He had an obliging disposition. He wanted to help those around him. He wanted to see all made joyous. If he could not do as much as he wished in that direction, it was not his fault ; it was because it was not in his power to do all he would have been glad to do. He was a large-hearted, broad-minded man ; not always understood, but the better he was known the more he was beloved. He was a shrewd business man, liked money, and had large talents for accumulation, but he liked to pay it out equally well, and in such way as to benefit his fellow men. He was a statesman, and has left a record of which his friends may be proud.

## CHAPTER LIII.

The Reconstruction Era—Negro Suffrage—Johnson's Swing Around the Circle—The Fenian Raid—Cholera—Hanging of Wirz—Death of General Scott and Dean Richmond.

Our civil war being at an end, the reconstruction of the rebel states was the next thing in order. Provisional governors were appointed in most of the states by the federal government, and under their direction there were conventions held and measures adopted to annul the acts of the rebel governments, so that "practical relations" with the loyal states might be restored. These provisional governors were styled "carpet-baggers," and the governments put in operation by them were called "carpet-bag governments." Just why the general government adopted the plan it did is not very clear, but probably it was because it could not agree upon any other. It appears to me that the seceding states might have been allowed to occupy the condition of territories for an indefinite period, or until congress should see fit to admit them. Of course, I understand the position which Mr. Lincoln and others occupied. It was, that the states which had undertaken to go out of the Union had attempted a feat which could by no possibility be accomplished; that the Union was indissoluble; hence it could do nothing which might be construed as sustaining the doctrine of secession. It intended to stamp out that heresy so completely that it would never find advocates at any future period. In a word, it desired to kill the doctrines of Calhoun and his disciples so thoroughly that they would stay dead for all time.

Still, in the appointment of provisional governors, clothed with authority to call conventions for the establishment of state governments that would act in harmony with the loyal states, it appears to me it might have gone a step further, and said to the rebel states: "You can stand just where you are until the general government is satisfied that you will behave yourselves. You have acted badly; you have made your sister states an immense amount of trouble and expense. They would like some guarantee that you will behave better in the future. Your slaves have been emancipated; will you treat them fairly? Will you see that they have their just rights? Will you make provision for the education of the blacks, so that they may be qualified to care for themselves, and fitted to discharge all the duties pertaining to citizenship? If you will, then representatives of your choice will be welcomed in congress. Nobody wants to punish you, but it must be understood that you will behave better than you ever have if you are going to participate in the making of laws for the Union."

I don't think I would have allowed the seceding states to resume "practical relations with the government" all at once. I would have let some of the most loyal, most intelligent and best behaved be represented in congress at the outset, and if the plan worked satisfactorily I would have opened the legislative halls of the nation to other states. But some of the states should have been kept as they were for a good while. Such states as Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas might have been allowed delegates in congress, but no votes. I would not have given them an opportunity to vote against the admission of Dakota, composed of as intelligent people as there are in the country, into the Union. I think states which had remained loyal to the old flag, and shed rivers of blood to keep it afloat, might, with entire propriety, have retained control of the government until such time as

the confederate states were able to understand something of the character of republican institutions, and were prepared to give them a cheerful support. But those who were in control of the government at the time doubtless acted in accordance with their best judgment.

The truth is, the business of reconstruction was a novel one to our people and their representatives. The rebellion had been put down. Slavery had been abolished. Still it could not be pretended that the inhabitants of rebeldom were in first-rate shape for self government. The masses of the southern people were strangers to popular rule. It is not singular, therefore, that there was a great diversity of opinion at Washington as to the best mode of establishing free institutions among them. Mr. Lincoln had his notions, while living, and it is well known that they did not square very well with the views of congress. President Johnson had his "policy," but that was pretty generally dissented from by the legislative branch of the government. Moreover, there was a wide difference of opinion in congress upon the subject. There were no less than five or six parties in that body, each one of them believing its plan the wisest. Some congressmen held that the work of restoring the rebel states to their practical relations with the government had been fully accomplished by the president. Some denied the power of the president to exact any conditions of those states, holding that with the laying down of arms, and their return to peaceful pursuits, they at once became entitled to all their former rights and privileges, while others held that when active hostilities ceased the rebel states were without legal civil governments until they were conferred by federal authority. One section held that no rebel state should be "re-admitted" to its place in the Union till it had placed all its citizens, without regard to color or caste, on a perfect civil and political equality before the law. Another



section maintained that the property of leading rebels should be confiscated, and that their political franchises should never be restored, and that the work of reconstruction should be commenced *de novo*; *i. e.* as if there had never been governments in the rebel states. Another proposed to offer universal amnesty for universal suffrage. And still another section, which finally absorbed all others, favored the principles embodied in the amendment to the constitution, known as article thirteen, which wiped out slavery in this country, root and branch. A bill was reported from the reconstruction committee, providing that any state ratifying this amendment should be entitled to representatives in congress, but it was defeated in the house. In July, 1866, the legislature of Tennessee ratified the amendment, and on the 23d of the same month a bill declaring that the state had resumed its practical relations with the government was passed. This was the first step in the rehabilitation of the seceded states. Other states followed suit, until finally they all were restored to the Union.

In the same year another amendment to the constitution, known as Article XIV., was proposed. It makes all citizens equal before the law, and all states equal in the matter of representation in congress, legalizes the public debt, etc.

Later, Article XV., securing to the colored people the right of suffrage, was proposed, and in 1870 declared adopted.

I have doubted the wisdom of making voters of all the colored men in the rebel states, without any kind of qualification. There was quite enough illiteracy at our elections without adding a million, more or less, of persons who know almost literally nothing of the nature of a ballot or the functions of civil government. But the policy of our statesmen has been to make voters of

all, (except women,) to allow all a voice in the elections, to make all participants in the business of government, and thus qualify them to discharge the duties of citizenship. That it has operated fairly well, as a whole, is not disputed, and possibly no adverse results are to be looked for hereafter. At any rate, there is no use borrowing trouble. The blacks who have been made voters are well inclined, and if they can be educated, as doubtless they will be in time, they will make good citizens. At present the privileges guaranteed them are of little value. In some cases they are used by the whites, in others wickedly intimidated, while in others their votes are not counted. There are localities in the southern states in which the election officers take the liberty of entirely disregarding the colored vote, if given in opposition to candidates whose election they favor. In fact, colored suffrage is, to a large extent, a farce in most, if not all, the southern states. However, it is not likely that these things will continue always. The "solid south" will not forever remain solid. There will be conflicting interests there, and consequently conflicting parties, as there are at the north. Then the colored vote will be felt at the elections, and probably on the right side.

A massacre at New Orleans on the 30th of July, growing out of the attempt of a mob to prevent the reassembling of the delegates to the state convention held in 1864, was the topic of newspaper discussion for a brief period. Of course, the negroes were the sufferers, over thirty of them having been shot down as if they had been so many brutes, while but one of their assailants was harmed, and he, it was supposed, was killed by a stray shot from his friends.

At no time was there a very good understanding between congress and President Johnson, but the breach continued to grow wider, and in August a convention of

his friends was held in Philadelphia, at which a lengthy address and resolutions were adopted. This was followed by a rupture in Johnson's cabinet. Subsequently the president and Secretary Seward made a tour to Chicago, to be present at the laying of the corner-stone for the monument to be erected in memory of Stephen A. Douglas. They proceeded via Philadelphia, New York, Albany, Buffalo, &c., addressing the people at nearly every station on the way. This trip was characterized by the press as Johnson "swinging around the circle."

What is known in history as the "Fenian raid" took place in 1866. Toward the end of May considerable numbers of Fenians rendezvoused at St. Albans, in Vermont, and Buffalo and Malone, in this state, making their way thither in small parties from different sections of the country. A party passed through Watertown, if I remember right, for some point north, and some excitement prevailed among our citizens. Trouble with Canada or Great Britain was apprehended; but no great harm was done. The Fenians themselves were little else than vagabonds, and they were led by persons no better than themselves. A few of them crossed the border near Buffalo, and had one or two skirmishes with the Canadian troops, but were defeated and driven back to the United States. A crossing was also made at St. Albans, but it experienced the same fate as the one at Buffalo.

A devastating fire at Portland, Me., on the 4th of July, destroyed fully one-third of the city, comprising the entire business portion, rendering one-quarter of the population homeless, and wiping out property to the amount of \$10,000,000. The fire, it was said, started from the burning of a fire-cracker.

Twenty-four hundred houses, rendering 18,000 persons homeless, were burned the 15th of October, in the same year, in Quebec.

The cholera visited New York, Brooklyn, Cincinnati and St. Louis in 1866. The scourge was severest at the west. It also prevailed somewhat extensively abroad.

The keeper of the Andersonville prison, Henry Wirz, was hung on the 10th of November, having been found guilty of "murder in violation of the laws and customs of war."

Jeff. Davis was indicted for treason in June by the grand jury of Norfolk, Va., but he was not tried, else he might have shared the fate of Wirz, which he so richly deserved.

General Winfield Scott died at West Point on the 29th of May. He lacked a few days of being eighty years old.

Dean Richmond, president of the New York Central railroad, and a prominent democratic politician, died in New York on the 27th of August, at the age of sixty-two.

The Atlantic telegraph cable was successfully laid in July. The Great Eastern left Valentia Bay on the 13th, and on the 29th a dispatch was received in New York, from Cyrus W. Field, announcing the success of the enterprise.

Jefferson county, in 1866, was represented in the senate by John O'Donnell, and in the assembly by Theodore Camfield, Nelson D. Ferguson and Russell B. Biddlecom. St. Lawrence was represented in the senate by Abel Godard, and in the assembly by George M. Gleason, William R. Chamberlain and Daniel Shaw. Oswego, senate, John J. Wolcott; assembly, DeWitt C. Littlejohn, William H. Rice and John Parker. Lewis, Alexander Y. Stewart.

Lyman Tremaine, a very able lawyer of Albany, was the speaker of the assembly. He was, however, an indifferent presiding officer. Some very ordinary men acquit themselves creditably in the speaker's chair,

while those of great talents often prove dismal failures.

O. V. Brainard, Esq., thirty-two years cashier of the Jefferson county bank, died the 16th of January.

Butter sold readily in Watertown at fifty-five cents a pound in April of this year.

Hon. Stephen Strong, who married the widow of Norris M. Woodruff, and resided in the Woodruff mansion on Arsenal street, died on the 5th of April. He was formerly county judge of Tioga county and member of congress.

Jefferson county lost a member of assembly under the apportionment made this year. The supervisors held a meeting in June for the purpose of redistricting the county. The Black river was made the boundary line between the two districts, the district on the south side being No. 1, and that on the north side No. 2.

David Hamlin sold his cheese, July 3, at nineteen and one-half cents per pound.

An event of the season was the launch of a 480 tons burden schooner at Henderson on August 25th.

On the first day of December, 1866, the bridge at Black river, over the principal branch of the stream, was washed away.

Reuben E. Fenton was re-elected governor in 1866, and Stewart L. Woodford lieutenant governor. Addison H. Laflin was re-elected to congress.



## CHAPTER LIV.

Progress of Reconstruction—Plans of Congress Opposed by the President—A Resolution Looking to His Impeachment Passes the House—Lost—The Tenure of Office Act—Events of 1867, General and Local.

The work of reconstruction, entered upon immediately after the close of the war, made slow progress. A measure introduced in the house of representatives as early as July, 1866, by Thad Stevens of Pennsylvania, was called up soon after congress assembled, and on the 28th of January (1867) referred to the "reconstruction committee." The bill was referred back February 6, and passed the house a week later. In the senate several propositions to amend were offered, but only one, which was submitted by Mr. Sherman of Ohio, was adopted. The senate and house were at loggerheads. A conference committee was asked for by the house, and refused by the senate. Finally, the house so amended the bill that the senate concurred, and it went through both houses. As passed, the act declared that no legal state governments or adequate protection for life or property existed in the rebel states; divided the states into military districts; provided for the appointment of commanders thereof by the president, devolving upon him the protection of life and property, and declaring interference, under color of state authority, null and void; provided for military trials; provided for the framing of constitutions by conventions, elected by male citizens, twenty-one years old and upward, of whatever race, color or previous condition, who had been residents of the state one year, and not disfranchised for rebellion or felony, said constitutions to confer the elective franchise



on the same persons, to be ratified by the electors thus created, and approved by congress; and when the fourteenth amendment shall have been ratified by the legislatures, and been adopted into the constitution of the United States, provided persons disqualified by it shall not have voted for members of said convention, then those states shall be entitled to representation. Until thus represented, civil governments existing therein are subject to the government of the United States. This act was vetoed by the president, who objected to the military power conferred and to conferring suffrage upon the blacks. It was promptly passed over the veto, in the senate by a vote of 38 to 10, and in the house by 135 to 48. A supplemental bill, providing for a registry, for the election of delegates, was passed, vetoed by the president, and passed over his head.

By this time the republicans in congress were getting out of patience with President Johnson, and a resolution to impeach him passed the house by a vote of 107 to 38. The president was charged with usurping power, and corruptly using the appointing power, pardoning power and veto power. The matter was referred to the judiciary committee of the house for investigation. In November the committee reported, the majority favoring impeachment. After a lengthy debate, the impeachment resolution was lost, 57 to 108. The affirmative votes were all republicans. In the negative there were 67 republicans and 41 democrats.

What is known as the "tenure of office bill," which deprived the president of the power to make removals from office without the consent of the senate, was passed, then vetoed by the president, and afterwards passed over the veto, the senate by a vote of 35 to 11, and the house by 131 to 37. It provided that all civil officers appointed by the president, with the advice and consent of the senate, except members of the cabinet, shall hold

until a successor be appointed ; that they shall not be removed except for cause, and such cause and removal shall be reported to the senate ; if no appointment is made by the consent of the senate, such office shall remain in abeyance ; that every removal contrary to this act, or any appointment, shall be a high misdemeanor. No money shall be paid to any one holding office contrary to the provisions of this act.

This bill, which became a law twenty years ago, and was designed to prevent Johnson from ousting from office republicans toward whom he might feel a dislike, has been repealed.

A pension bill was passed in 1867, and the president authorized to appoint pension agents in the several states.

Jeff. Davis was taken from Fortress Monroe, on a writ of habeas corpus, May 11th, and conveyed to Richmond. On the 13th he appeared in court, and was admitted to bail. Among his sureties were Horace Greeley, Gerrit Smith, and Augustus Schell, of New York.

Mr. Motley, American minister to Vienna, resigned, in consequence of receiving a letter from Secretary Seward, stating that he had been informed that he (Motley) did not conceal his disgust at the president's policy. Henry J. Raymond was nominated to fill the vacancy, but the senate refused to confirm. Horace Greeley was then nominated and confirmed, but refused to accept the position.

The breach between the majority of congress and the president became very serious, or would have been serious had the latter's ability equaled his disposition. But the republicans in congress were substantially a unit as against the president, so he was powerless for mischief. His administration of the duties of his office satisfied me, as I have before stated, that it makes precious little difference who is in the presidential office. The person

temporarily in charge can harm himself more than any one else. He cannot damage any public interest to any great extent.

He quarreled with Secretary Stanton, and requested him to resign his position in the cabinet, but the latter flatly refused. Then the war office was turned over to General Grant, who was empowered to act as secretary of war *ad interim*. In this arrangement Mr. Stanton acquiesced.

Meantime the work of "reconstruction" was proceeding in the rebel states, but very slowly.

The fortieth congress assembled July 4th, and was in session a considerable part of the time until the first Monday in December.

The provinces of Upper and Lower Canada were consolidated in July, 1867, under the name of the Dominion of Canada.

Maximilian was executed in Mexico June 19, 1867. He was an Austrian, son of the Archduke Francis Charles, and the youngest brother of the Emperor Francis Joseph. The French undertook to establish an empire in Mexico, and Maximilian allowed himself to be placed at the head of the government. The ruling powers in Mexico objected to the arrangement, took up arms in defense of their government, and, after several sharp engagements, succeeded in capturing Maximilian and the troops that he led. It is stated that he was betrayed, which is not unlikely. But the truth is, he had no business in Mexico. The Mexican people are difficult to manage—until within a few years they were always at war—and for that reason, if no other, outsiders should not have interfered with them. Maximilian is very well spoken of, but he was wholly ignorant of the character of the Mexicans, or he would have remained at home, where he belonged.

Roscoe Conkling was chosen to the United States senate, for the first time, in January, 1867. He succeeded Ira Harris. His principal opponent was Noah Davis, then a justice of the supreme court in the eighth district. The canvass was quietly conducted, and I never heard it intimated that improper influences were employed on either side. A. B. Cornell, afterwards governor, took charge of Mr. Conkling's interests, though Mr. Conkling himself was present and advised of all that was done. I was myself in sympathy with Mr. Conkling, and assisted him wherever I was able. His friends were very suspicious of Governor Fenton. Residing in the same section of the state as Judge Davis, and being a personal friend of the judge, it was feared that the governor might be quietly using his influence against the gentleman from Oneida, and in favor of Davis. But I judge that these apprehensions were without any real foundation. I had frequent conversations with the governor on the subject, and he invariably expressed himself one way, saying that he did not see how he could properly interfere in the matter. He admitted that on personal grounds he might have a preference between the gentlemen named, but not having a vote, either at the caucus or in the election, he did not care to exert any influence he might be supposed to possess in favor of either.

On account of my relations with Governor Fenton it was taken for granted that I was inimical to Mr. Conkling; but this was not so. I never had any differences with Mr. Conkling, personal or otherwise. He had his peculiarities, as have most men who have brains. I advocated his re-election to the senate in 1873 and in 1879, and had he not voluntarily resigned his seat in that body, I dare say I should have been in favor of keeping him there indefinitely. He was a man of transcendent ability, and just such a man as the Empire state ought to have for its representative in the senate of the United States. Take

half a dozen men from that body, and Mr. Conkling had more brains than all the rest put together. It was a great misfortune, in my judgment, that Messrs. Conkling and Fenton could not have acted in concert. Had they done so, New York would have commanded an influence in the nation to which she was justly entitled.

Jefferson county was represented at Albany, in 1867, senate, by John O'Donnell, and in the assembly by Lafayette J. Bigelow and A. D. Shaw. St. Lawrence county, senate, by Abel Godard; assembly, George M. Gleason, William R. Chamberlain and Richmond Bicknell. Oswego, senate, J. J. Wolcott, D. W. C. Littlejohn, William H. Rice and Charles McKinney. Lewis, Henry A. Phillips.

The "new poor law," designed to restore the distinction between town and county poor, was adopted by the board of supervisors of Jefferson county January 10.

A Protestant Episcopal church was organized in this place August 14th, called the Grace church.



## CHAPTER LV.

Cobbling the State Constitution—The Eminent Men of the Convention  
—The Weakness of That Body—What It Did and What It Didn't.

The electors of this state, at the general election held in 1866, having voted in favor of a convention to revise the constitution and amend the same, the legislature, in 1867, passed an act for the election of delegates thereto, which was held April 23. Thirty-two delegates-at-large were chosen, electors being restricted to sixteen names upon their ballots, thus securing equal representation, so far as these delegates were concerned, to the two political parties of the day. The convention met in the assembly chamber, June 4, 1867, and adjourned *sine die* February 28, 1868. In the meantime, an adjournment had been had from September 24 to November 12, 1867. The convention contained more talent probably than any gathering of any sort ever held in the state. Men of recognized ability were named in all of the thirty-two districts, and the delegates-at-large embraced such men as Judge Andrews, Judge Church, Judge Comstock, George William Curtis, William M. Evarts, Charles J. Folger, Horace Greeley, Ira Harris, Waldo Hutchins, Francis Kernan, Henry C. Murphy, George Opdyke, Alonzo C. Page, E. S. Prosser, Augustus Schell, David L. Seymour, Martin I. Townsend, Smith M. Weed, and William A. Wheeler. Mr. Wheeler was president of the convention, and Luther Caldwell secretary.

Had the convention been restricted to the thirty-two delegates-at-large, I believe it would have been a much better working body than it was, and that it would have accomplished more, and in a shorter period of time.



It contained 160 delegates, something over 100 of them lawyers, two-thirds of whom were bound to do something which would render their names immortal or perish in the effort. It embraced a goodly number of sagacious, level-headed men, who understood something of the defects of the old constitution, and wherein it might be improved, but what could they do, surrounded as they were by an army of cranks and impracticables, who had been designated to revise and amend that instrument? Very little, of course. A dozen first-class men, representing the various leading interests in the state, embracing a single good lawyer, would have accomplished more and better work in six or eight weeks, at the outside, than these 160 renowned men would have achieved in a quarter of a century. They were in session nearly two-thirds of a year, and spent days and weeks in dreary, hair-splitting and unprofitable debates on irrelevant subjects, exhausting popular patience and disgusting all sensible persons; and at last submitted the result of their labors to the people, who rejected the document, with the exception of the judiciary article, the worst one in the lot, as a matter of course. Truly "the mountain labored and brought forth a mouse." Just what the convention cost, I do not remember, but I think it was something over half a million of dollars, every cent of which was utterly wasted, unless it taught the people that if the organic law of the state needs changing, the work must be committed to a much smaller body, and one in which the majority shall consist of sound business men rather than windy lawyers.

It is conceded on all hands that that convention was too large and too talented; *i. e.* it contained too many *great men*, many of them mere theorists, and wholly impracticable. There were also a number of extreme conservatives, of the W. M. Evarts kind, who opposed every measure that had not been adjudicated and settled

by the courts. To these might have been added a number of zealous partisans of the Sanford E. Church school, who used their position chiefly to advance the interests of their party. And then Horace Greeley was there. He "meant business," and could not endure long, dilatory speeches. So thoroughly out of patience was he with some of the long-winded members, that on several occasions he left the convention in disgust when they arose to speak.

The delegates from this (then the eighteenth) district to that convention were James A. Bell, Marcus Bickford, and M. H. Merwin of Jefferson county, and Edward A. Brown of Lewis.

From the seventeenth district the delegates were W. C. Brown, E. A. Merritt, L. W. Russell, and Joel J. Seaver.

The twenty-first district was represented by Lester M. Case and Loren Fowler of Madison, and M. Lindley Lee and Elias Root of Oswego.

Mr. Bell and Mr. (now Judge) Merwin were both superior men for the positions to which they were chosen. They were thoroughly practical. Mr. Bell's knowledge of state affairs, which he had acquired in the senate, eminently qualified him for a seat in the convention, and enabled him to offer such amendments to that instrument as his experience and the growth of the state required. He was a member of the important committee on canals, and chairman of the one on the salt springs of the state.

His thorough investigations and exhaustive report on the salt springs unearthed many of the devices which manufacturers and combinations employed to enrich themselves at the expense of the state, and showed, in an alarming manner, that the state was unfit to manage any financial operation. He likewise learned that however much the Syracuseans differed on other subjects—religion or politics—they were always united on salt.

The legislature of 1867 was considered to be a bad one, and the consequence was, the republican party was held responsible, and badly defeated at the election held in the fall. The democrats elected their state ticket, headed by Homer A. Nelson for secretary of state. William F. Allen was elected comptroller, Wheeler H. Bristol treasurer, Marshall B. Champlin attorney general, and Van R. Richmond state engineer and surveyor.

The democrats also carried the assembly by a considerable majority, which elected William Hitchman speaker, and Cornelius W. Armstrong clerk.

Whether this branch of the legislature was an improvement upon its predecessor, I cannot say ; but the senate was evidently a regenerated body, for Boss Tweed, Mike Norton, Harry Genet, and several other bright and shining democratic lights took seats as senators the first of January, 1868, for the first time.

## CHAPTER LVI.

The Greeley Campaign in 1872—How an Editor Got into It—How He Ran for Congress, and Didn't Get There.

The Syracuse Standard, in writing up its own history for fifty-eight years, made a few mistakes, most of them of no special importance to the public generally, though they do not tally with the exact truth. For instance, it states that Mr. Farmer, after "working at the case several months" on the New York Tribune, on the first day of January, 1841, became the partner of A. L. Smith in the publication of the Standard. As the Tribune was not started until three or four months subsequent to this date, of course he did not work in the Tribune office, but I believe he was employed on the "Log Cabin" during the campaign of 1840. I think the Standard is wrong as to the year in which Mr. F. died, but that is of little consequence. The most important error it makes relates to the Watertown Times, which it says supported the liberal republican Greeley movement in 1872. The fact is, the Times favored the re-election of General Grant, and opposed the Greeley ticket as strenuously as any journal in the state. Probably the author of the Standard article, remembering that the writer was a "little wayward" in 1872, labored under the impression that the Times fell out by the wayside. But it didn't do it. It was loyal to the republican party and to Grant.

As no explanation of my conduct during the Greeley campaign of 1872 has ever been given, perhaps I shall be pardoned for making it now.

I will remark at the outset that I took no part in the nomination of Mr. Greeley for president. I did not

attend the Cincinnati convention, and had I been there I should not have favored the idea of bringing him into the field. While I had a very high opinion of Mr. Greeley as a journalist—for I don't think he has ever had his equal in that capacity in this country—I never could see any sensible reason for his wanting an office. He was a failure as a representative in congress, and would have been a failure in the senate had he been chosen to a seat in that branch of the national legislature. Just what he would have done as an executive, of course no one knows, but I do not imagine he would have been a brilliant success. I was in a convention in which he was a formidable candidate for governor, and felt constrained to vote against him, not because I was not his friend, but because I was his friend, and therefore thought he had better stay at the head of the Tribune, and let some one else take the gubernatorial chair. The woods are full of men who will creditably fill the office of governor, but they are "mighty scarce" who are capable of discharging the duties of a first-class editor, and I had the impression that there was no man in the country competent to take Mr. Greeley's place, and I still think I was right.

For these and other considerations I should have felt bound to withhold my support from Mr. Greeley had I been a member of the convention which put him in nomination for the presidency. But he had friends there who thought his designation would be a good stroke of policy. They strongly urged his claims, and succeeded in their purposes. He was made the nominee of a party or faction styling itself "Liberal Republican," and I judge that Mr. Greeley was gratified and flattered by the action of the convention.

Most brilliant men have their weaknesses, and Mr. Greeley was not an exception. No child was ever more pleased with a top than was Horace Greeley with an

office. He withdrew from the firm of Seward, Weed & Greeley for the silly reason that having good offices at their disposal, they had overlooked his claims. They had a better opinion of him than he had of himself. They thought that to tender an office to a man of Mr. Greeley's calibre, confessedly one of the great lights of the world, would be the next thing to an insult ; but Mr. Greeley was indignant, and displayed traits of character entirely unworthy a man of his talents and standing, because they failed to do it.

“ O wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us  
To see oursels as ithers see us !  
It would frae monie a blunder free us,  
An' foolish notion.”

However, Mr. Greeley was nominated for the first office within the gift of the American people. I was cleaning up my door-yard when a republican neighbor communicated to me the information. It gratified him more than it did me.

Two or three days afterward, Mr. George W. Flower, who had attended the convention from this section of the state, came into the Times office with a call for a meeting to ratify the nominations made at Cincinnati, which he wished printed in hand-bill form. While there he observed :

“Brockway, you will support this ticket, I suppose?”

I replied, without hesitation and frankly : “I presume if I live till fall, I shall give Mr. Greeley my vote.”

A mere politician would have measured his words. He would have wanted time to consider the matter, and he might have said one thing and forgotten all about it the next day. There are men in politics who pursue this course, and often with success. They are accounted shrewd and smart.

A day or two later Mr. Flower came after his hand-bills, and, while talking with me, remarked :



"Of course, you will attend the ratification meeting, and I think you had better preside."

I replied: "Oh, no, George, I can't think of doing that. My associates, Mr. Ingalls and Mr. Skinner, are both Grant men, and will support the regular nominations. That fact will determine the course of the paper. I should not like to do anything to embarrass my associates or impair the influence of the Times, as arraying myself in open opposition to them would tend to do. If you can feel reasonably safe of my vote at the election, that is all you ought to ask."

I supposed this would end the matter, but it didn't. On the morning of the day appointed for holding the ratification meeting, I was waited on by two or three gentlemen, who said they had been appointed a committee by the liberal republicans of Watertown to request me to attend the ratification meeting and act as chairman.

I repeated to them what I had said to Mr. Flower, and told them that under the circumstances they ought not to ask me to take a step which would look as if the managers of the paper were at variance; that I considered myself at liberty to vote for my old friend Greeley for president if I saw fit, but I was not disposed in any way to compromise the Times newspaper.

At this point one of the party, coming very near me, said in an undertone that "our friends" seemed to be growing timid, and that no pronounced republican appeared willing to assume the responsibility of acting as chairman of the ratification gathering. To use his own words, they were "beginning to exhibit the white feather."

Annoyed by the fact that my explanation had not been deemed sufficient, and disgusted that full-grown men should hesitate to stand up for their convictions, in a moment of impatience, I exclaimed:

“If no one else has the courage to act as chairman of a meeting to ratify the nomination of so good a republican and true a man as Horace Greeley, I have. You can say to the gentlemen who wished you to call on me that I will preside.”

And I did. In taking the chair I uttered but a few words. I told the large audience that I had known Mr. Greeley a long time, as had my auditors; that he had been a zealous and efficient republican from the day the party was organized; that I was not aware that he had been untrue to the principles and usages of the party, and that I thought he was at least as well qualified for the presidential office as General Grant.

I told my associates in the Times that they could look after the politics of the paper, and I would attend to the news.

For a few weeks the Greeley movement looked promising—in some localities half the republicans and more appeared to be in it—but it was outside the regular party organization. There was no political machine to support it. The machine was back of Grant, and it was a formidable affair at the time.

However, the liberal republicans kept up courage for several months. They had the support of some of the ablest journals in the country, among them the New York Tribune, Cincinnati Commercial, Chicago Tribune, Louisville Journal, Springfield Republican, and the Missouri Democrat, St. Louis. In July the ticket was adopted by the democratic national convention, when there was so much of an alliance between the liberals and the democrats that they made common cause against the supporters of Grant, and generally agreed upon the same men for congress and for the state and local offices. This did not help the liberals, for it deprived them of the sympathy of vast numbers of republicans who had been out-and-out war men, and who had serious objec-

tions to hitching up with the democrats, most of whom, it was well known, had been strongly opposed to the war. I judge that at any time prior to July Mr. Greeley would have divided the republican vote very evenly with General Grant in this and possibly other states, but after that date the Greeley movement was evidently on the wane, and by the middle of September it was plainly nowhere. There were great numbers of democrats who were indifferent to the Greeley ticket. They knew they had always been against Mr. Greeley, and that he had always been against them, and had said worse things about them than any other man. To them it appeared that both presidential tickets were headed by republicans, and that Grant was the least obnoxious of the two. So they were easily induced to vote for Grant. In saying this I do not mean to intimate that the democrats acted in bad faith. The leading men in that party rendered the ticket a zealous support, but they could not control the votes of the rank and file, who could not see how the democrats were to be benefited by the election of Mr. Greeley.

During the summer two or three of the "liberals" said to me at different times, "Brockway, you will have to take the nomination for congress this fall." I ridiculed the idea, giving the matter no serious consideration. I supposed there would be some one in the district who would be pleased to run for the office. The thing drifted along in this way until about the time the state nominations were made, when, to my surprise, I discovered that everything had been arranged to make me the liberal candidate for congress. I say I was surprised. This is hardly true. So many strange things had happened that I was surprised at nothing.

At the nominating convention no other name was mentioned, so there was but one thing for me to do, and that was to stand for congress. To this I was in a meas-

ure reconciled by the fact, then plain to everybody, that there was no possibility of my election. However, I made a very good run, and one with which I was entirely satisfied. There were 12,899 voters in the district who desired that I should represent them in the house of representatives—at least, they so declared at the polls—a number greater by several thousand than many received who were chosen, and this was an endorsement of which I had no reason to complain.

The Times opposed me vehemently, sometimes criticising my conduct quite unnecessarily, as it appeared to me; but I never complained. I don't think I was particularly harmed. Few of my republican friends condemned my action, saying that, as a life-long friend of Mr. Greeley, they did not blame me for sustaining him for president. I did reckon myself the warm friend of Mr. Greeley. He had always been a good friend of mine, and I would have made almost any personal sacrifice in preference to being untrue to him. The sin of ingratitude, or seeming ingratitude, has never been justly laid at my door.

After the election I resumed my duties on the Times. One of my associates doubted if the readers of the paper would be satisfied to allow a Greeleyite to provide matter for them, but as I had never quarreled with them, and owned a third interest in the paper, I proposed to look after it, and not allow it to go to the wall. If fault has been found with this course, I am ignorant of the fact. I only know that a year or two later the entire concern came into my hands, and since that time it has enjoyed a state of financial prosperity which it had not hitherto experienced, and, thanks to the business men of Watertown and the intelligent people of Northern New York, it has a patronage today enjoyed by few journals outside the large cities.

Of course, I did not join the democratic party in 1872. In supporting Mr. Greeley I considered myself just as good a republican as were the men who sustained General Grant, who had never voted the republican ticket previous to his nomination for president. And yet I have not felt like speaking unkindly of those democrats who favored my selection for congress and gave me their generous support. It is not their fault that I was not honored far beyond my deserts, and I could not feel otherwise than grateful to them.

This much in reference to the Greeley campaign and my connection therewith.

## CHAPTER LVII.

The Late Senator Nye—His First Entrance into the Senate—Some Personal Characteristics.

There is little difficulty in gaining admission to the floors of the senate or assembly in our state. There are often more outsiders inside the assembly chamber than is desirable, and complaint is now and then made by some constitutional "kicker," when the presiding officer calls attention to the rule regarding the admission of persons to the floor of the house from the outside world, and instructs the door-keepers to see that it is enforced, which they do for the space of possibly fifteen minutes, when, having other duties to perform, strangers crowd inside as usual, unless some one else demands the enforcement of the rule.

The state senate is a small body, and there is generally room enough in the chamber, outside the seats of the members, to accommodate all who care to be spectators of the proceedings in the upper house.

It is rather more difficult to get into the house of representatives at Washington, though there are usually about as many people in the alley back of the seats of the members and in the cloak-rooms, and who, as a rule, have no right to be there, as there are members and officers of the house. The senate, however, is more particular. The rules of that body exclude all persons from the floor while it is in session, except members of the house and other high officers, but senators can admit their private secretaries by card, and if the phrase "private secretaries" includes newspaper correspondents, friends of senators and prominent visitors to the



capitol, this is simply an evidence of the elasticity of parliamentary phraseology. When Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes entered the chamber one day, a year or two since, some one asked him how he gained admission. "Oh," said Senator Evarts, "he is my private secretary." When the senate goes into executive session only senators are admitted either to the floor or to the galleries.

And this reminds me of a story that the late General Nye, one of the wittiest and most eloquent orators that ever occupied the political rostrum, used to relate.

"I was," said he, "in the senate chamber one morning, conversing with Senator (afterwards Governor) Dix. As the hour of 12 o'clock approached, when the senate goes into session, the senator said to me, in his blandest manner, that he was very sorry that the rules of the senate were such that he could not invite me to remain in the chamber, and consequently he would be compelled to ask me to retire."

Thereupon Nye withdrew, and was standing in the ante-room, where he remained a few minutes, and until after the doors of the senate were opened. Just at this time he was approached by one of the door-keepers, who said :

"Ah, governor, you would like a seat in the chamber, and I will see that one is assigned you."

"I merely thanked the official," said Nye, "and followed him into the chamber. He gave me a seat within ten feet of that occupied by my friend Dix, whom I had left a few minutes before.

"The senator looked at me in some amazement, with an expression of countenance which seemed to say : 'How in thunder did you get in here?' But he said nothing ; neither did I.

"The senate happened to be engaged in the consideration of a subject in which I was especially interested, so I remained for a couple of hours, probably.

“Standing outside, and unable to gain admission to the floor, I noticed Erastus Corning of Albany, then a member of the New York senate, president of the Central railroad, and one of the most substantial business men our state has ever produced, who had really some claim to the seat I was occupying, whereas I had none whatever. However, I said nothing.

“The next day I was again at the capitol, and was approached by the bland door-keeper, and conducted to my old seat in the senate, and the same courtesy was shown me a third time.

“By this time I had concluded my business in Washington, and was preparing to leave.

“As I came out of the chamber for the third time, I looked up the door-keeper to whom I have referred, saying :

“ ‘My friend, may I inquire to whose courtesy I am indebted for the privilege of occupying a seat in the senate chamber during the last three days ?’

“ ‘Why,’ replied the doorkeeper, ‘are you not Governor Boggs, of Missouri ?’

“ ‘Well, not exactly,’ said the New York lawyer. ‘I have never had the honor of being governor of Missouri or of any other state. I have never been in congress, or even held a seat in the state legislature. Indeed, I have never held office to any great extent, though at home I am known as General Nye, from the fact that in my boyhood days I was at the head of a regiment of the state militia. However, my friend, it’s all right. I am stopping at the National hotel, and you will please dine with me today.’ ”

The invitation was accepted, and on his way to the hotel he ran against Mr. Corning, who was likewise asked to take dinner with him.

At the hour appointed, Nye and his guests sat down to a well-furnished table, at which, no doubt, there was

something to drink as well as to eat. General Nye was at home at such a gathering, and it is safe to say kept his friends in a roar of laughter by his humorous stories from the beginning to the end of the sit-down.

Subsequently, General Nye was appointed governor of Nevada, and when the territory was made a state, he was chosen United States senator, and so legitimately occupied a seat in the chamber to which he had been admitted through the ignorance of the door-keeper, who had mistaken him for a Missouri governor.

The last time I heard him speak was on the floor of this same senate chamber. His hair, originally jet black, was now tinged with gray, and he spoke with deliberation, and in a manner becoming a grave and reverend senator. I met him afterwards at his hotel, but he was apparently losing the vivacity for which he was distinguished in early life.

General Nye was born at De Ruyter, in this state, in 1814, and died at White Plains, N. Y., in 1876. Originally a democrat, he became a barnburner in 1847, and a republican on the organization of the republican party. He hated slavery, and, in connection with Thomas Star King, did much to keep the Pacific states and territories out of the clutches of the slave propagandists and in the Union during the early period of the civil war. In the campaign of 1860 he went on a tour through the west, in company with William H. Seward. Of course, the two did good political service. Nye had his faults, as have most men, but a good, true heart. He was the inflexible foe of injustice and wrong. He was district attorney of Madison county, and afterward its county judge eight years. He removed to New York in 1857, and was the first president of the Metropolitan board of police, holding the position about three years. His official life was without blemish. He was noted for his humor and conversational powers. After retiring from public life his mind became impaired.

## CHAPTER LVIII.

Henry Ward Beecher—In the Pulpit and Out of it—As I Saw Him—A Thorough Democrat.

I hesitate to give my own personal recollections of Mr. Beecher, for the reason that I knew little of him that was not known by countless thousands throughout the land ; for he preached in Plymouth church almost forty years, and so great has been his fame that nearly everybody who has happened to spend Sunday in New York has taken pains to cross over to Brooklyn and listen to one of his sermons. Besides, he has lectured in all parts of the north and west, lectured to vast audiences, so that there are few people who have not seen Mr. Beecher and felt personally acquainted, even though they may never have held any conversation with him. So I have known him only as a million of others knew him.

I first met him, I think, in Oswego, where he came to deliver a lecture nearly forty years ago. He spoke in a small hall on Second street, on the west side of the river. It was a little frame building, called (possibly) Franklin hall, and would seat 400 to 500 persons. It was packed, of course. After the lecture was over I was favored with an introduction to the speaker, and was afforded an opportunity of seeing something of him personally. I remember that the Hon. Alvin Bronson, then one of Oswego's most distinguished citizens, in extending congratulations, observed, " You have had a large audience, Mr. Beecher."

" Not very much of one, I should say," responded Mr. Beecher. " You have plenty of lumber here, I judge ; why don't your people build a hall of some capacity,

one that would seat thousands and not a few hundred? You need a more commodious hall."

That remark struck me as being eminently practical.

I have heard Mr. Beecher lecture a great many times. I have always been pleased and instructed. But I desire to say that those who have heard him only upon the platform, or now and then in his own church in Brooklyn, have a very inadequate idea of the power of the man as a pulpit orator. During the two years I resided in New York I attended Plymouth church very regularly, and when he was in the prime of life. His sermons generally occupied about an hour in delivery, and, as a rule, you were more interested the last half hour than in the first part of the discourse, when he was arranging the foundation for the magnificent structure he was about to erect. I never saw a drowsy man in his congregation, and they were more wide awake when he closed his Bible and pronounced the benediction than at any previous time. He appeared to grow as he unfolded his subject, and his auditors grew with him. He made religion, right living and right doing, attractive; and it is difficult to see how any one could listen to him without being benefited, without having higher ideas of the purposes of human existence and truer conceptions of the relationship of man to his Maker. You listened because you felt interested, because his utterances harmonized with all the better emotions of your nature; so you did not tire with his words; you did not feel weary even when he had spoken two hours; you were more likely to wish he would go on another hour; at least, you felt as though you would gladly listen as long as the great preacher was inclined to talk.

I never knew anything of the manner in which he prepared his sermons. He usually had notes, but never paid the least attention to them. It would have been a ludicrous spectacle to see Mr. Beecher undertake



to read a discourse. He did not preach in that way. He may have prepared a skeleton sermon, but the discourse was entirely extemporaneous; and I have no doubt his best utterances, his loftiest flights of eloquence, his noblest and grandest thoughts, thoughts that would move every fibre of your being, came to him while he was speaking; in other words, they were inspired by the occasion, and were truly words of inspiration. It was these unpremeditated words, which came from the depths of his being and entered your very soul, that took hold of his auditors, and enabled him to lead them at will, or it may have been the power behind him, which was using him as its instrument. To appreciate these, his choicest and sublimest thoughts, or the most beautiful creations of his brilliant imagination, one needed to listen to his ordinary discourses, as they were given to his congregation week after week. It was here that the real greatness of Mr. Beecher appeared, and not in his prepared lectures and addresses, which he was accustomed to deliver as opportunity offered. These, though able and eloquent, were tame by the side of some of his weekly discourses.

I shall never forget an occurrence I witnessed one Sunday morning. He had read several notices of meetings of various sorts to be held during the week, and then took up a letter from some town at the west, soliciting aid to found some educational institution in that new and comparatively destitute section of the land. Having read the epistle slowly and carefully, it occurred to Mr. Beecher, I presume, that the parties asking assistance ought to have it, and he began telling his audience about "the west," of the wealth of its natural resources, which were still undeveloped. It was still sparsely settled, but was destined to be thickly populated, and its inhabitants, being so favored by nature, were to become prosperous and affluent and powerful.



It was to be a mighty empire in itself. But it was important that those who go there should have an opportunity to be educated, and improve those opportunities. It was being settled by our sons and our daughters, and they needed all the advantages that we have at the east. He referred to our wealth and our ability to give, contrasting the two sections of the country, showing how we were favored, what an abundance we had of everything, and how much the new states required to place them on a level with the old and favored ones. It was of transcendent importance to start the new communities that are being formed in the right way—educationally, morally, religiously. His theme was fraught with such interest to him that he appeared reluctant to leave it; it expanded and broadened and loomed up as he went on; he saw “the west” as we see it today, and and as it is to be in the hereafter; and his listeners saw it as he did, the populous, thrifty, mighty section it has already become and is to be. He probably spoke fifteen minutes, in a manner peculiar to himself, presenting his subject in the most eloquent and effective style; when, apparently remembering that he was not making a speech or delivering a sermon, he abruptly stopped, remarking as he did so, “I did not think we would take up a collection for this object until after the sermon, but I believe it had better be taken now.”

Whereupon the contribution boxes were passed, and a remarkably quiet performance it was, for there was precious little silver deposited in these receptacles of charity. All contributed, and in bank notes. I have no idea of the amount raised, but, judging from appearances, I should say there must have been half a bushel of bills if emptied into a basket, as they were paid over to the collectors.

I knew Mr. Beecher very well, but not intimately. I don't think he had a great many intimate friends. He

did not know every person to whom he was introduced, as James G. Blaine is said to. He was not a politician, and so did not consider it at all important that he should remember everybody. He was simple and unsuspecting as a child. In some respects he resembled Horace Greeley ; he gave the world credit for a great deal more integrity and moral rectitude than it really possesses. Out of the pulpit he would hardly have been suspected of being a clergyman. He was not ministerial either in his dress or ways. To see him in conversation with one of his friends, you would say he was a man of the world, abounding in good nature and overflowing with humor, rather than a preacher of the gospel. He did not put on any airs. He did not seek to impress you with his greatness—possibly he did not know that he was great. I never gave the slightest credence to the charges that were preferred against him ; I did not consider the persons making them worthy to unlatch his shoes.

The last time I met Mr. Beecher was in this city. It was in 1877, if I remember right. He had come to Wattertown to deliver a lecture. He was walking up State street, and I overtook him on the sidewalk near the State Street Methodist church. After exchanging salutations, I told him it occurred to me that some one of his clerical brethren should have had sufficient consideration to procure a carriage and drive him over the town. He replied that he preferred to walk ; remarking that his "old legs" were yet serving him faithfully, and he desired to examine the town in some detail. He wanted to see where the common people lived, the mechanics and tradesmen, who are the life-blood and chief dependence of a place. I told him I would act as his escort, if he cared for one, and render him such service as I was able. He acquiesced in the suggestion, and we proceeded together up State street, perhaps to Rut-

land, and then returned and went up William as far as Academy, doing that part of the city quite thoroughly, and finally made our way back to the Arcade. The Times office was then in that building, and I invited him in, and tendered to him the editorial chair for his use.

In the course of our conversation, I told him we had just been putting a new engine into the Times office, a beautiful piece of mechanism, and asked him if he would like to look at it and see it work. "Of course, he would; for if there was a thing on earth he would like to be, if he were not a human being, it would be a steam engine, with its marvelous power, and which accomplished its work with such precision and ease."

Then we repaired to the printing office, where the engine was in motion. It had just been put in its place by Watertown Portable Engine Company, and fully justified, as it does today, the high character I gave it. A handsomer or easier working engine never was made. It was explained, as a peculiarity of this engine, that when the belt was slipped off the governor the engine would stop instead of moving with greatly increased velocity, as had been the case with the old-style engines. This was a new thing to the Brooklyn preacher, and he wished the belt removed that he might see the truthfulness of the statement demonstrated. This was done; and then Mr. Beecher desired to replace the belt, and did it with his own hands.

In the lecture delivered in the evening, Mr. Beecher referred to the tasteful and tidy residences of our people, stating that they were unmistakable evidences of prosperity. He had not discovered any signs of poverty and destitution, but everything betokened thrift and comfort, and this remark appeared to be applicable to the people generally.

Mr. Beecher was a democrat, not as the term is used by the politicians, but in the broadest and best sense of the word. He was a man who believed in the equal rights of all. He wanted every person to have all the privileges and blessings which the most favored enjoy. He desired the happiness of all, and to that end he sought the enlightenment, elevation and moral improvement of the entire human family. He gave his life to that work.

## CHAPTER LIX.

An Excited Senatorial Contest—Fenton Against Morgan—The Former Chosen.

After the election of 1868, at which John T. Hoffman was chosen chief magistrate of the Empire state, being in Albany, I called upon Governor Fenton at the executive chamber in the old capitol building, when he introduced to me the subject of the then approaching senatorial contest.

“Brockway,” said he, “what do you think of the idea of letting my name be used for the office?”

I replied that he doubtless understood the situation better than I did, and was therefore more competent to answer the inquiry he had addressed me than I was.

He said: “I can beat Governor Morgan. He is cold as an iceberg; his supporters, to a large extent, are indifferent to him; he has money, and that will be his chief reliance; while I have no money to put into the canvass, and would not use it if I had, for I do not believe a man should be chosen to the important office of U. S. senator because he has a well-filled pocket-book. I am certain that I have a greater number of enthusiastic supporters among the men who have been chosen to the legislature than the ex-governor. Still, I am reluctant to enter the contest, which is certain to be an animated and possibly a bitter one; and were I to consult my personal feelings, I should keep out of it entirely. I have been well dealt with by the people of the state, and ought to be content to retire to private life. I am debating whether I will do so, or allow my friends who are urging me to enter the senatorial fight to have their way.”

I told him the matter was one that I had not thought of at all. It was generally understood that Morgan would be in the field, and, backed as he was, he was certain to be a formidable candidate. I told Governor Fenton that of course I should greatly prefer him to Morgan, for whom I had no special affection. I had not forgotten the way in which he had obtained the senatorship in 1863. Preston King had held the position one term, had discharged its duties with ability and the utmost fidelity, and there was no good reason for laying him aside. But Morgan wanted the office; and while Mr. King was faithfully attending to the business he had been designated to perform, Governor Morgan's henchmen appeared in Albany, made a quiet canvass for him, and, to the surprise of the great body of the republicans of the state, who were not aware that there was to be any opposition to Mr. King, that gentleman was shelved, and Governor Morgan, by a small majority, made the nominee of the caucus. There was a general feeling that Mr. King had been shabbily treated. Mr. King himself, who was extremely sensitive and the soul of honor, felt the act most keenly, and it is not unlikely that it was the cause of his death by suicide. I told Governor Fenton that if Morgan should fail of a re-election he would have no reason to complain; that the verdict of fair-minded men would be that he was served right.

A month after this interview it was apparent that the re-election of Governor Morgan was to be contested, and Governor Fenton was perhaps more frequently mentioned as the proper man to succeed him than any one else. But several names were used, those of Judge Noah Davis, Marshall O. Roberts and John A. Griswold among others; and it was not until after the assembling of the legislature that Governor Fenton consented to the use of his name for the place. He said to all who conversed with him on the subject: "If you can concentrate the



opposition to Morgan on any name which will command more votes than mine, you should by all means do it. He will be a hard man to beat. The strongest man must be pitted against him. Whether I am that one or not my friends must decide. I shall quite as cheerfully use whatever influence I may possess in favor of any one else as to be in the field myself."

A week or ten days before the time fixed by statute for the election of senator Governor Fenton engaged a suite of rooms at the Delavan, and about the same time Senator Morgan became a guest of the same establishment. Operations then commenced. For a short time the canvass proceeded quietly, but as the day approached for holding the caucus things became decidedly lively. The old Delavan was filled, it is pretty safe to say, as it never was before, and perhaps will never be again. All the leading republicans in the state who were supposed to be capable of exerting the least influence upon members of the legislature were there. The house was literally packed and running over. I was a visitor at the governor's headquarters for two or three days, but the crowd became so great, the excitement so overwhelming, that I remained on the outside, contenting myself with doing what I could among the members individually. I don't think many votes were changed. The great effort was to hold men supposed to be for one or the other of the candidates. Jefferson county was represented in the assembly by Jay Dimick and W. W. Butterfield. Both, I believe, voted for Morgan, though the former assured me that he preferred Fenton, and would vote for him if he acted upon his own convictions. But the republican politicians in Watertown were generally for Morgan, and they wrote letters to him, telling him in frantic language that unless he was willing to be politically damned he would stand by Morgan to the end. It was a clear attempt at intimidation. Mr. Dimick exhibited the let-

ters to me, so that I know what I am saying. They were anything but creditable to their authors, but they answered the purposes designed. They held Mr. Dimick's vote. I cannot speak so advisedly as to the action of his colleague.

I have said that I did not think many votes were changed during the canvass; possibly not one; but this thing did occur, as I have been told by a gentleman who was inside the ring: The interests of Governor Morgan were placed in charge of two men, both well-known lobbyists of the higher type, possessing superior qualifications for the work in hand. One of them approached a gentleman, supposed to be devoted to the fortunes of Governor Fenton, while seated in the office of the hotel, saying that he wanted to see him in his room. This proposition was declined by the friend of Governor Fenton, who told the other that if he had anything to say he would hear it where he was; whereupon the representative of Senator Morgan frankly stated that the senator wanted the votes of six assemblymen who were not so decided in their preferences for senator but that they would be governed by his wishes, especially if they could be suitably compensated for their action. Just what passed between these gentlemen will probably never be divulged. It is sufficient to say the proposition, which was neither more nor less than an offer to purchase six votes for Senator Morgan, was accepted; and it may or may not have been the scheme which had been adopted six years before for retiring Preston King and electing Governor Morgan. If so, the gentleman last named might have known, if he did not, that he was dealing with a different sort of men from those he encountered in 1863; men who were posted in his methods, and prepared to take advantage of them. Governor Fenton's representative was one of the shrewdest operators in the state. He was a match for Governor Morgan

in any emergency. He desired to consult the men whom it was proposed to purchase, for it was a very serious responsibility he had been asked to assume. Having done this, he was prepared to act. The men were all right and to be depended upon. They were to enter a certain room, pass out at a particular door, where would be seated a cashier, who, after taking their names, would hand them an envelope containing the amount of money which had been agreed upon, when they were to make their exit from another door. Whether these gentlemen knew what the envelope contained is a matter of entire uncertainty. They did as they were directed to do, passed through the apartments and received the documents handed them, which presumably were passed over to the gentleman who had requested them to perform the service. It is, moreover, doubtful if they understood the purpose of the proceeding, or what the package handed them contained. It is, however, known that the envelopes contained each \$2,000, or \$12,000 in all, and that they were shortly in the apartments of Governor Fenton's representative, where the money was counted. I was informed at the time that this was done within fifteen minutes after the packages were delivered.

Few knew anything of this execrable proceeding—possibly not half a dozen persons, and these were naturally reticent. From this time onward Governor Fenton's friends wore a serious and anxious look, claiming to be hopeful rather than confident, while those of Governor Morgan affected to consider his re-election as good as secured. Several days passed by with little or no change in the situation. All were waiting for the caucus to come off. Morgan's supporters were smiling and happy, while those of Fenton looked unusually grave. They refused to talk; they allowed their opponents to do all the blowing. And this thing went on

until the champions of the rival candidates were preparing to go to the caucus. Then the betting men were around. There were sports from New York, with fabulous amounts of money, which they were willing to risk on the result of the caucus. The crowd filling the hotel was very generally for Morgan, so it was deemed safe to bet on him. Such Fenton men as happened to be visible were cruelly bullied and badgered by the horde in charge of Morgan's canvass until the last moment, when some friend of Fenton was found who had reluctantly come to the conclusion to accommodate Morgan's betting men; whereupon large sums went up in a twinkling. Every bet offered was promptly taken. It was stated at the time that not less than \$100,000 changed hands that evening. Tom Murphy was reported to be a heavy loser.

The result of the caucus need not be stated. Governor Fenton received 52 of the 92 votes cast, and was declared duly nominated. It is assumed that the six votes which Morgan's representatives supposed they had secured by purchase were given to Fenton, as they should have been if they expressed the preferences of the gentlemen entitled to cast them. The action of the caucus was communicated to me by the late Senator Low, who was one of Fenton's intimate friends, and who kept me advised of the progress of matters at headquarters.\* As might be expected, the backers of Morgan at the Delavan were

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\*Concerning the caucus, these particulars have been furnished me by one of Governor Fenton's friends, who, with another gentleman, devised the plan adopted: The sergeant-at-arms of the assembly, who was the custodian of the assembly chamber in which the caucus was to be held, was requested to take measures for the exclusion of all persons save those entitled to participate therein and the clerks of the senate and assembly, unless the caucus itself should direct otherwise. The sergeant expressed doubts of his ability to comply with this request, but upon being assured that he would have the support of a sufficient number of the city police to aid him in the effort, promised to undertake the task. So as early as 4 or 5 o'clock in the afternoon the chamber was cleared and the doors closed to outsiders. Some tried to gain admittance, but the floor was kept clear of lobbyists and newspaper reporters. The arrangement did not suit some of Governor Morgan's

greatly enraged. They had not only failed to secure the nomination of their candidate, but had lost the large sums of money they had staked on the result. They swore vengeance, and after a few months found themselves in possession of the ear of President Grant, which was closed to Senator Fenton and his friends. The president was induced to believe that Fenton was a bad man, ambitious and unscrupulous; that he even aspired to be his successor at the end of his first term. The result was that Mr. Fenton was powerless with the administration, though it is not pretended that he did not discharge his senatorial duties with eminent ability and the utmost fidelity.

It may be questioned if Governor Fenton added anything to his good name by going to the senate. I am quite sure he did not fill the measure of his own ambition. He had rendered very excellent service in the house of representatives, and his administration as governor was exceptionally pure and patriotic. It was one of the cleanest administrations the state has ever had. He went to Washington as senator with high aims and lofty purposes. He intended to add something to his well-earned reputation. He took a high position at the outset, and was looked upon as the worthy colleague of the distinguished Roscoe Conkling. In some respects he was superior to Mr. Conkling, for he was a gentleman whom all could approach, and who had a kind word for

friends, and the late Judge Folger is reported to have inveighed strongly against it, but to no purpose. The general feeling was that it was right. It was certainly as fair for one side as the other, and it was left undisturbed. The caucus was therefore a remarkably quiet one. Hardly any person left his seat except to deposit his ballot. The informal vote stood:

For Fenton,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	50
Morgan,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	40
Blank,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2—92

The formal ballot was then taken, when Fenton received 52 votes, and Morgan 40.

Beyond question, the result expressed the true sentiment of the republicans of the state.



every one. He had as many personal friends as any man who ever took his seat in the U. S. senate, and for a few months he was a great power at the seat of government. I happened to be in Washington shortly after he assumed his senatorial duties, and was a witness of the tremendous crowds that filled his rooms at the hotel where he stopped ; and I shall not forget an occurrence that took place when only Porter Sheldon, who had been chosen as his successor in the house of representatives, and myself were present. His quarters had been filled with people the entire day, but they had finally all retired, leaving the senator, Mr. Sheldon and myself the sole occupants of his private room. It was probably 11 o'clock in the evening. Lighting a cigar and seating himself before a blazing fire, Mr. Fenton expressed himself in this wise :

“ Sheldon, I can understand very well why you are here. There was a time when I wanted to come to Washington as the people's representative myself. The ambition is a natural and laudable one ; but what under heaven I am here for, with so many looking to me for favors which I have no power to render, I am puzzled to decide.”

These sentiments came from the bottom of his heart, and I think that for the moment he realized that he had made a mistake in consenting to be elected to the senate. But he had been chosen, and there was no escaping the responsibility of the station.

The election of Governor Fenton, and the manner in which it was accomplished, was perhaps a misfortune so far as the governor was concerned ; but if a majority of the republicans in the legislature preferred him to Governor Morgan, there would appear to be no good reason why they should not so record their convictions. Certainly Governor Morgan had no reason to complain. If it was his purpose to secure a re-elec-



tion by the corrupt use of money, he ought to have been defeated. It has never been stated, to my knowledge, that other than legitimate methods were employed in aid of Governor Fenton. The most that has ever been asserted is that the money paid by Governor Morgan was used to pay Governor Fenton's legitimate expenses. He told me himself that he did not pay out a dollar to influence the action of any member of the legislature, and I believe he told the exact truth.

## CHAPTER LX.

President Hayes—The Clean Character of His Administration—Some of the Things He Accomplished—A Visit to the White House—Dining with the President's Family—Mr. and Mrs. Hayes' Domestic Life.

I thought well of President Hayes when he was chosen, and do yet. His administration, if not faultless, came as near being so as have those of most of the men who have occupied the white-house. That he possessed extraordinary talents, no one has ever pretended, so far as I know; but he was an upright man, and discharged the functions of his high office faithfully. The democrats have always pretended to think that he was not fairly chosen, and therefore not justly entitled to the office; but I have a different impression. It has appeared to me that the most indefensible measures were employed by the supporters of Governor Tilden to place him in the presidential chair—measures that should have resulted in defeat, irrespective of the decision of the electoral commission which determined the legal question submitted for adjudication in favor of Mr. Hayes. That there was a good deal of politics in the action of the commission, no one will dispute; but does any one suppose that the democrats would have reached a different conclusion under the same circumstances? When did democratic judges ever fail to stand by political friends when a possible political advantage was to be gained?

But I do not care to discuss a question long ago put to rest. I only say that the devices resorted to by Governor Tilden and his immediate friends to secure the presidential prize were such as no fair-minded man can jus-

tify, whatever may be his politics. So far as Mr. Hayes is concerned, it has never been intimated that he soiled his hands to obtain the presidency, and he certainly had no agency in suggesting the commission which settled the question in dispute in his favor.

His administration was not in any respect brilliant, but it was eminently respectable; it was clean. It has not been the most brilliant men that have given us the best administration of public affairs, but men honest with themselves and honest with the people. That the affairs of government ran along smoothly, without incident, was irritating to those lovers of contention, who called it a "Sunday school" administration, thus paying a compliment where a sneer was intended. Observing statesmen in other nations pronounced it a strong administration.

The problems which confronted President Hayes were purely of a business nature. He surrounded himself with a cabinet of the men eminent for dealing with business questions. William M. Evarts was his secretary of state, John Sherman his secretary of treasury—such was the character of his cabinet—all men who had proved themselves especially adapted to the work assigned them, not chosen for political reasons, but for the best service to the nation under the emergencies of the times. There was an unsettled condition of affairs in the south. There was still the bitterness of war and defeat that checked the noble effort to restore prosperity and peace. President Hayes appointed as one of his cabinet, Key of Tennessee, a southern republican. The troops which had been a source of irritation were withdrawn, and the south was put on its own responsibility to preserve the peace and build up its fortunes. The prosperity of the southern people dates from Mr. Hayes' administration. They had no longer an excuse for bemoaning their fate; they were free to rise or fall by

their own efforts. Today they are better off than they were in the ante-bellum days, and have added millions on millions to the national wealth.

The great financial panic of 1873 had been slowly tightening the channels of trade, and its effects were felt at their worst in 1876, when Mr. Hayes was chosen. It was in this state of affairs, when men were most despondent, when idle factories were each an appeal, and idle hands were stretched out for work to do, that Tilden based his campaign on the war cry, "A change is necessary."

Freeing himself from all entanglements by first announcing that he would not be a candidate for re-election, President Hayes' administration addressed itself to so shaping the financial conduct of the government that the natural laws of trade should bring relief. Confidence was restored, and with confidence came prosperity. Specie payment was resumed, without a jar, where financiers had proclaimed that it could not be done, but that resumption would bring even greater depression than had yet been experienced. The affairs of government were so well conducted that it was the boast of the party orators in the next campaign, that the infinitesimal loss in the transaction of government business was less than under any previous administration since the government began.

In the winter of 1878 I was in Washington, and while dining with General Merritt of St. Lawrence at the Briggs house, I remarked, "I must go over and see the president before I leave the city. You know I have always thought well of him, and I should like to shake his hand."

"Go over with me tomorrow," said the general; "I have an appointment with him at 2 o'clock, and I would like to have you go along." I told him the arrangement would suit me.

When we reached the white-house the cabinet was in session, and we were allowed to remain a short time in an ante-room until it adjourned, when the doors were opened, and we walked into the room from which the cabinet officers were retiring. I was introduced to the president and to Secretary Evarts. The president invited me to a seat on a sofa near him. General Merritt engaged in an interview with Mr. Evarts, and I entered into conversation with the president.

I told him, among other things, that I was conducting a journal in Northern New York, which had warmly supported his administration from the outset; that it appeared to me that the policy he was pursuing was the correct one, and that it would have the approval of the cool heads, both north and south, in the end. The president seemed pleased with these utterances.

At length General Merritt concluded his business with Mr. Evarts, when the latter retired, and the general joined the president and myself. I arose to leave, when the president, rising to his feet, said :

"Gentlemen, please walk in and see Mrs. Hayes." Without affording us an opportunity to decline, he opened the door of an adjoining room, and conducted us into the presence of the mistress of the white-house. The general had met Mrs. Hayes previously, and so took her extended hand as we went in. The president, in presenting me to his wife, said :

"Mrs. Hayes, this gentleman, Mr. Brockway, is a neighbor and friend of General Merritt and of Vice-President Wheeler, the editor of a leading newspaper in the northern part of New York; and *believes in us.*" The last words were emphasized, and Mrs. Hayes laughed heartily.

In a few moments the president inquired after "lunch," when Mrs. Hayes informed him that lunch would not be served that day; that in consequence of a reception to be

given in the evening in the house, dinner would be served instead. Then, turning to General Merritt and myself, she said, in her peculiarly charming way: "Gentlemen, lay off your overcoats, and go to dinner with us."

This invitation I should have declined, had I discovered any easy way of doing it. But her words were so cordial and unaffected that I did not attempt to get out of the dilemma. Mrs. Hayes approached me, took my arm, and together we led the way to dinner, on the lower floor of the building. She took her place at the head of the table, gave me a seat at her right, and next to me was seated her little daughter Fanny, eight or nine years old; the president and General Merritt sat on the opposite side of the table.

The dinner was a plain one, consisting of baked white-fish, roast turkey, with cranberry sauce, sweet potatoes, beans and tomatoes, followed by apple dumplings and grapes, oranges and bananas, raisins, and a cup of coffee. The president was inclined to be facetious. When the apple dumplings were brought upon the table, he spoke of them as "dog jews-harps." Being asked to explain, he stated that on a certain occasion one of these articles, smoking hot, had fallen from the table, and been seized by the family dog, lying near. The animal found the morsel too hot for mastication, and employed both paws in clearing its mouth. The motions were much like those of a jews-harp player, so the dumpling became known in that household as a dog jews-harp.

The changes from one course to another were not effected with the formality of waiting until all had finished at whatever was then on the table, and then removing all dishes at once, with the customary flourish. Instead of this, as each individual's plate was ready to be changed, a waiter quietly replaced it with another, and served him with the next course, all going on in this simple style, and without a break in the repast. The



dinner did not last over half an hour, and in no respect differed from that of the average private family. After dinner Mrs. Hayes placed the handsome little bouquet on the table in front of me in the button hole of my coat, and I conducted her back to her room.

On my way thither I remarked that I had never before seen this part of the white-house, when she volunteered to show me through the upper part of the same. She showed me her own bed-room, and that of her sons, (two beds in one room;) in fact, she showed me all the bed-rooms. I believe there are nine of them; they were roomy, and handsomely, though not extravagantly furnished. We then returned to Mrs. Hayes' apartment, and while General Merritt talked with the president, I talked with the wife. Mrs. Hayes was a pleasant lady, and quite as much at ease in the white-house as any lady could be in her own home, and made no parade. Both herself and husband had the faculty of making you feel perfectly at home. In the course of my conversation with Mrs. Hayes, I told her that while Mr. Fenton was governor of New York, and Mrs. Fenton an occupant of the executive mansion, I called on her one day, and on inquiring after her health, she remarked that she was "feeling pretty well, but was rather tired, having run a sewing machine a good part of the day." Mrs. Hayes said she had thought of bringing her sewing machine to Washington, but it was so much the worse for wear that she had concluded it would not pay transportation.

Mrs. Hayes dressed plainly, had black hair, a pretty large mouth, and showed her teeth when she talked or laughed. She was not handsome in the ordinary acceptation of the term, did not have a clear white skin, nor handsome features, but her agreeableness and good, practical sense made you forget whether she was handsome or plain. She was evidently the right sort of a woman for the position she occupied. She was at home

in any society, knew how to entertain all classes of people, and make them feel at ease.

On the 31st of December, 1877, their silver wedding was held at the white-house, and cards of invitation were sent out, which read, "Mrs. Hayes and I will be pleased to see you."

Mr. Hayes was of a cheerful disposition. He joked and made good-natured, pleasant speeches. Mrs. Hayes was his counterpart in some respects, and different in others. She laughed more heartily than he did, perhaps I should say she was more demonstrative. Her laugh was natural, and the gestures with which it was accompanied were equally so. She expressed herself on the subject of temperance, by saying that while she was not disposed to prescribe rules for others, she thought no harm could result from her being a temperance woman, and she thought it better that her influence in the position she occupied should be on that side than on the other.

The meetings Sunday evenings, for a social sing, she referred to, saying they were gatherings of the family and particular friends. Mr. Wheeler attended; they assisted him to while away lonely evenings, and served to relieve the desolateness inseparable from his great bereavement. Mrs. Hayes said Mr. Wheeler had sent up a dozen hymn and music books for use, marked "executive mansion." "I told him," said she, "that would not do; that being thus labeled, they would be the property of the government, and could not be removed; whereupon he had the marking changed."

Mrs. Hayes spoke of the charges that had been made against Mrs. Lincoln, that she had taken things from the white-house not her own. She was not inclined to blame her. It was not so easy a matter to keep track of what property belonged to that establishment, and what belonged to the occupants, as might be supposed. She

was not at all surprised that Mrs. Lincoln, in her then mental condition, should have carried away articles not rightfully hers.

I judged from what was said that Mrs. Hayes made it a rule to respond to all applications for alms, except they came from those who are obviously swindlers. I don't think large sums were disbursed ; a dollar, I think, was the amount usually bestowed. This may seem insignificant, but it must be remembered that the calls were almost without limit, and were the mistress of the white-house to pay out a larger sum, except in extraordinary cases, a fortune would soon be exhausted.

The little daughter, Fanny, prepared herself for a ride or walk, and came to her mother for some change. She was often met in the street, so her mother stated, and asked for money, and the girl felt mortified if unable to respond. So she went provided with means to meet calls from the seemingly needy. This daughter was a quiet, well-mannered little girl. I do not understand what was meant by the remark once credited to Mrs. Hayes, "I am obliged to compromise with my little lady, as I find her growing old too fast for her years ; we serve her dinner in her room, which she esteems a high compliment." This is certainly not correct, so far as my observation went, for I was seated at the side of the little miss. and I discovered no evidence that she was growing too old for one of her years. She did, indeed, appear to be a womanly little girl ; but she was as simple and unostentatious, I venture to say, as any girl of her age in Washington. She had auburn hair, and was dressed in a plain, becoming manner.

Mrs. Hayes spoke to me of the rooms in the white-house as she is represented to have spoken to others. She had no complaint to make of them. The principal chambers or sleeping rooms are large, twenty to twenty-five feet square, and fifteen high, I should say. They

are plain, but have a very substantial and comfortable look. Mrs. Hayes doubted if the nation would today erect so sensible a building for the president and family to live in as the present white-house. It might, and doubtless would, put up a more costly edifice ; it would be more modern in style, and be more showy and elaborate in appearance ; but after all, it is questionable if it would be better adapted to the purposes for which it was designed. She deemed it a credit to the designer, and thought that a dwelling which suited those who first occupied it should satisfy their successors.

## CHAPTER LXI.

In Jackson's Time—His Second Election—Followed by a Series of Exciting Political Events.

I remember very well the presidential campaign of 1832. I was then 17 years old. The reader may wonder that I did not get interested in political affairs earlier; that I did not get stirred up in the campaign of 1828. But please remember that that was a go-as-you-please race. There were four candidates in the field, all republicans. And then I am not certain that the "small boy" had come into existence at that time, or if really upon earth, that he was the important factor in political campaigns he has since become. I may here add that I had not got into the newspaper business to any extent in 1828.

I was, however, a wide-awake politician in 1832, and a thorough-going Jackson man, for the reason that influences a majority of persons who expect to become voters some day, and often settles their politics for life, namely, my father was a pronounced friend of Old Hickory. I knew enough of the history of Jackson to know that he had fought the battle of New Orleans, and won a victory almost without parallel in the annals of military warfare by using cotton bales as breastworks, whereby hundreds of the enemy were slain, while his own losses were insignificant, less than a dozen men, as I remember. I also knew that he was a man of uncommon energy and push, that he was fearless, and possessed any amount of will power, and these qualities excited admiration in my youthful breast.

Of the political issues involved in the election of which I am writing, I was not very well enlightened. There were four presidential candidates, viz: Andrew Jackson, Henry Clay, John G. Floyd and William Wirt. The latter, an eminent Maryland lawyer, was supported by the anti-masons, who were quite numerous in Vermont, in the western part of this state, in Western Pennsylvania, and in what was called the Western Reserve in Ohio. (In passing I may say that the state of Vermont voted for Wirt.) Where I then resided, the supporters of General Jackson were oftener styled Jackson men than anything else, while the friends of Mr. Clay called themselves National Republicans. In this state the Jackson men, I believe, called themselves Democratic Republicans. There was no whig party at this time. That came into being later, and embraced the National Republicans and all others who dissented from the policy of Jackson.

The congress which convened in December, 1831, had before it the question of the re-charter of the United States bank. As I recollect, it was the leading subject discussed. Political considerations did not necessarily enter into the discussion, but, as I remember, the supporters of Mr. Clay generally favored the re-charter of the institution, contending that it was demanded by the great commercial and financial interests of the nation. Besides, it was then the fiscal agent of the government. All the revenues collected from customs and other sources were deposited with the United States bank, and all demands against the government were paid by drafts upon the bank and its branches.

Well, after a lengthy debate, a bill to re-charter the institution passed both branches of congress, and went to the president to be signed. Instead of signing the bill he vetoed it. The veto was dated the 10th of July, 1832, in the middle of the presidential campaign. There can



be no doubt that the president acted upon the "courage of his convictions," for the bank was rather popular than otherwise, and little fault had been found with its doings so far as the public was advised. But it was vetoed. The act fell like a thunderbolt in a clear sky. The president was against the re-charter of the bank, and he was prepared to "sink or swim" by the stand he had taken.

Intense excitement prevailed, especially among business men, who deprecate all changes. A good many of the supporters of Jackson now joined the opposition. The New York Courier and Enquirer, conducted by James Watson Webb, the leading organ of the administration, hauled down the Jackson colors and went over to the enemies of the president. Other administration journals, of lesser note, followed suit. For a while the political heavens wore a decidedly squally look for the president and his cause. But it soon came out that Webb was indebted to the United States bank to the extent of \$52,000, and that members of congress and others who had strenuously favored the re-charter of the institution were in the same boat, some of them, as I remember, owing the bank a much larger amount than Webb. So they exerted a smaller influence than they otherwise would. Meantime the campaign waxed hot. The political cauldron was at boiling heat. The excitement where I resided was intense all through the fall and until the close of the election. The National Republicans espoused the cause of the bank and what they termed the "American system," which was another name for a protective tariff. The Jackson men simply stood by their leader in his opposition to the bank. The position of Jackson was thoroughly endorsed, for he received 219 electoral votes to 47 for Clay, 11 for Floyd and 7 for Wirt.

This election settled matters for the time being. But in the winter, before Jackson had taken his seat for the

second term, the nullification war broke out. The state of South Carolina, headed by John C. Calhoun, passed an ordinance proposing to disregard the laws of the federal government in relation to the collection of customs at the ports of entry in that state. This called forth a ringing proclamation from the president, in which he told South Carolina, in no ambiguous terms, that the laws of congress would be executed so long as he occupied the presidential office. They might operate injuriously to the interests of South Carolina, but they could not be set aside in the manner proposed, but would be enforced by the whole power of the government. I happened to be in a public meeting called to listen to the reading of the president's proclamation; and although it was composed chiefly of men who had voted against Jackson at the preceding election, it was one of the most enthusiastic gatherings I ever attended. The proclamation was read by the historian, George Bancroft,\* in his best style—and he was an accomplished reader—and was applauded from beginning to end; after which eloquent speeches were delivered by several gentlemen, all politically opposed to General Jackson, but stoutly supporting the positions he had taken. The document is said to have been written by Edward Livingstone, but the sentiments were those of Jackson, who, it is thought by many, would have been glad of an excuse for hanging Calhoun, thereby disposing of a man whom he considered a traitor to the country.

The proclamation was followed by the passage of a bill by congress, known as the force bill, which author-

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\*Mr. Bancroft then resided at Northampton, Mass., where the meeting spoken of was held. These doings will no doubt appear strange to those who live today, but they will please remember that daily papers were not as generally received and read as at present. Probably there were not a dozen dailies taken in the entire town, and possibly not half that number; so the masses assembled to have read to them a document of so much importance as was this proclamation.

ized the president to enforce the supremacy of the law. As the president proposed to act promptly in the matter, it looked very much as if there was trouble ahead. In this crisis Mr. Clay engineered through congress a bill essentially modifying the tariff act of which the nullifiers complained, and this afforded the latter an excuse for not proceeding to extremities. Things now moved along smoothly for several months, and until the following September. In the meantime the president had been paying a visit to New England. He appeared to be having a good time among the Yankees, when, all of a sudden, the idea struck him that his presence was required in Washington, and he proceeded thither with the least possible delay. Arriving there, he called his cabinet together, and informed them, by a paper that he had prepared, that in his judgment the United States bank was not a safe place in which to keep the government funds. The cabinet did not concur in the opinion, but the president was immovable. The secretary of the treasury, Mr. Duane, was directed to issue an order to the customs officers and others receiving moneys on account of the government to henceforth deposit the same in certain state banks which were named. This order Mr. Duane declined to execute, whereupon he was asked to "step down and out," and Roger B. Taney was appointed secretary of the treasury in his stead, and proceeded to comply with the wishes of the president.

This act, which in our day would be considered pretty high-handed, if not indefensible, created another great excitement throughout business circles; and when congress met, those senatorial giants, Webster, Clay and Calhoun, opened their batteries upon the president. They charged him with exercising power not delegated to him by the constitution and laws, and that he had acted in derogation of both. They refused to confirm the nomination of Mr. Taney; also the nominations he made for

government directors of the bank. Then the president nominated them a second time, and a second time they were rejected by the senate, which then proceeded to pass a resolution embodying their sentiments concerning the acts of the president, which they characterized as dangerous and worthy of a despot. To this resolution the president sent in a protest, which was an exceedingly vigorous document, and contains some of the most eloquent passages in the English language. I believe Amos Kendall was credited with writing it, but in spirit and tone it was thoroughly Jacksonian, and beyond doubt uttered his sentiments.

I might extend this article by detailing the action of the bank, which, at the start, took the ground that it could not longer accommodate its customers, and that they must pay their obligations. The state banks, in which the government deposits were kept, called "pet banks," were instructed to assist in quarters where the United States bank was seeking to oppress, when the latter institution, finding that its scheme of inflicting injury to make capital for itself and friends, would not work, suddenly changed its policy, and increased its loans instead of calling them in; and this, with the liberal course adopted by the "pet banks" and other state institutions, which supposed they might safely follow in the footsteps of the large banks, had the effect to inflate the currency to a fearful extent, until a collapse finally took place, and there was a general suspension of specie payment by the banks, and bankruptcy and ruin were well-nigh universal.

## CHAPTER LXII.

President Van Buren Chosen in 1836—Followed by a General Suspension of Payment and the Defeat of the Democratic Party.

Martin Van Buren was chosen president in 1836. He had been elected vice president in 1832, and no doubt felt some little satisfaction in presiding over a body that had rejected his nomination as minister to England. He was a politician possessing great shrewdness, and was a sagacious leader. His opponents called him the "little magician," perhaps because he appeared to succeed in his early career as if by magic. He was a man of great ability, beyond question, and more of a statesman than men are apt to be who have great political aspirations. I have not been able to discover any act in his life at variance with moral rectitude and devotion to the best interests of his country.

The contest in 1836 was between the democratic republicans and whigs. The opponents of General Jackson had been called whigs a couple of years. The name had been given to them by James Watson Webb, editor of the New York Courier & Enquirer, in 1834, and was generally accepted. The anti-masons, who wielded great power in the western part of the state, now became a part of the whig party. This added very materially to the strength of the opposition in this state.

Weed and Seward were both anti-masons, and the union of these people with the other elements arrayed against Jackson and Van Buren brought them forward as leaders in the party, and gave them a position which they maintained for more than a quarter of a century.



I was myself a journalist in 1836, though only 21 years of age. I labored faithfully and zealously for the election of Mr. Van Buren, and was gratified with his success. The campaign was not a remarkably vigorous one, and I have sometimes thought if his opponents had known their strength and made an earnest and united rally for General Harrison, or some one like him, they might have won. As it was, the hero of Tippecanoe developed such strength that he was naturally made the whig standard-bearer four years later, and carried the country against Mr. Van Buren by a veritable blizzard. But the success of Mr. Van Buren in 1836 appeared to be regarded as a foregone conclusion. So there was not a very determined fight made against him.

But Mr. Van Buren was not fairly in his seat as president before the country was visited by a regular financial earthquake. He was inaugurated on the 4th of March, and in May following all the banks in the Union suspended payment, and this led to the suspension of hundreds and thousands of merchants and others engaged in business. In fact, suspension of payment was so general that it might almost be called universal. The crash in 1873, thirty-six years later, was a trifling affair compared with the one of which I am writing. The country had been doing business on paper promises, issued in reckless profusion, and in utter disregard of every principle of honest banking, until a point was at last reached at which sober men began to inquire where the thing was to end, and asked for a settlement of dues. This brought financial matters to a crisis. When A demanded pay from B, B was obliged to exact payment from C, and C from D, and so on to the end of the alphabet, which being reached, it was found that the last debtor on the list expected to discharge his debts probably by a parcel of real estate, which its owner had considered worth a



million, when it might not bring a hundred dollars at forced sale. The consequence was, forty-nine out of fifty of the men in business found it impossible to meet their engagements, and were compelled to ask time. The state of things was very well described at the time thus :

“The present troubles are *owing to*”—

“Just so,” interrupted the person addressed. “It is because there is so much *owing to*, so little paying and so little to pay with, that we are all *busted*.”

The smash-up was worse than that of 1873, because the country was not as well off as at the last mentioned date. Again, the currency in 1837 was to a large extent worthless, mere trash. True, we had in this state our “safety fund” banks, but these suspended with all the rest, and their notes were selling at a considerable discount, while the notes of the banking institutions of other states ranged all the way from worthless to 5 per cent. discount. The business men of today can have no conception of the state of things for many months following the financial crash in 1837. Of course, it was impossible to buy or sell without using currency of some sort, so people used such as they could get hold of, good, bad and indifferent. They were glad to take anything with which they could live or pay debts. Those who are now turning up their noses at our silver dollars, halves and quarters ought to have lived in the last half of 1837 and the three or more years following, and I think they would regard them with the genuine affection I do.

The government was in no better condition than individuals. It could not very well refuse to take the notes of its “pet banks,” and these were received at the custom houses and in payment of other government dues. Everything was at sea; credit was gone and confidence destroyed. In September congress was convened to consider the condition of affairs. The president’s opponents

had charged him with "non-committalism;" but after the transmission of his message to congress, they were silent on that subject. It was a clear, straightforward statement of the case, and explicit in its recommendations. A divorce of the government from banks of any sort, state or national, was strongly recommended, with other measures to assist the government and people out of the financial difficulties in which they had become involved. The issue of treasury notes was urged and adopted by congress as a measure of temporary relief, and there were strong intimations that the government should conduct its business on a hard money basis.

The president's recommendations gave rise to warm debates in congress. The whigs vehemently opposed the policy of the administration, and were aided by several democrats, styling themselves "conservatives," who were more or less in sympathy with the state banks, and were dissatisfied with what they appeared to consider a war upon them. One of the senators of New York, Nathaniel P. Tallmadge, joined the opposition, and he was sustained by several democratic representatives from this state, among whom, if I am not mistaken, was the late Judge Foster of Oneida, and the representative of this district, Judge Isaac H. Bronson. William C. Rives, then a senator from Virginia, went with the opposition. In fact, the conservative sentiment was so strong that a newspaper was established at the seat of government in opposition to the "Globe," the organ of the administration, which was called the "Madisonian," and wielded great influence in the cause in which it was enlisted. The independent treasury scheme, then called the sub-treasury, which was introduced in congress at an early day, was defeated, and shared the same fate at the regular session, and possibly afterwards, but was passed by the next congress, and is now the law of the land,

and is a monument to the wisdom and firmness of Mr. Van Buren's administration. The bill authorizing the issue of treasury notes became a law, but was ridiculed and denounced in the opposition journals, which contained fac similes of the note, and occupied something like a third of a column. It, however, answered the purpose for which it was employed, and was retired when the independent treasury act went into operation.

Mr. Van Buren had been thought to be wanting in nerve ; but whoever looks over the doings of his official life will search in vain for evidence upon which to base such an opinion. He may have been cautious in taking a position, but once taken, he was firm as his predecessor, General Jackson. It may be said that there was but one thing for him to do as president, namely, take his position and stand firm. At any rate, that is what he did, in spite of the great perils with which he found himself encompassed. His party was so thoroughly demoralized that at the elections held in 1837 it was beaten almost everywhere. In this state the democrats elected less than thirty of the 128 members of assembly, and they lost the senators in most of the senate districts. Political friends deserted him by thousands. Still, he remained firm at his post. The following year (1838) the whigs elected their nominee for governor, William H. Seward, and about this time obtained control of both branches of the legislature, and of course had things their own way. They were happy, and the democrats, who had generally answered to the name of republican, and had held power for almost forty years, were now compelled to acknowledge themselves whipped. But their leader, Mr. Van Buren, never wavered. He accepted a nomination for re-election upon a platform pledging him to the support of the policy of his administration, when he must have known, as a sagacious

politician, that the indications all pointed to his defeat. As is known by all whose recollection reaches back fifty years, he was not only beaten, but disastrously so. Only a few straggling states voted for him, while the great majority vied with each other in piling up majorities for his opponent. The stampede against the president, which commenced in 1837, continued through 1838, 1839 and 1840, and culminated in the election of General Harrison in the year last mentioned.

## CHAPTER LXIII.

The Campaign of 1840—Better Known as the Log Cabin and Hard Cider Campaign.

I have tried to give the reader some idea of the financial condition of the country during the four years Mr. Van Buren occupied the presidential office. The bottom had dropped out of business, and no one appeared to know where he stood, or whether he stood at all. Those who owned farms continued to cultivate them, to sow and plant, to raise stock, and make butter and cheese, but when they came to dispose of their surplus products they took whatever they could get—anything with which they could procure the necessities of life, pacify creditors and pay taxes. Merchants received for goods such articles as they could exchange in the eastern markets for merchandise with which to replenish their stocks. Mechanics were glad to obtain “store pay” for their labor. They took anything which would afford them a living. There was not much “money” in circulation, and the little there was, was at a discount. If you were offered a bank note it was probably because its holder was afraid to keep it or wished to get rid of it while it possessed a nominal value. A “bank note detector,” containing a list of all the banking institutions in the country, with the supposed value of their issues, was kept in every place of business, and consulted whenever a “promise to pay” was tendered in exchange for an article desired or to reduce or pay a debt. Of silver and gold there was almost literally none. If a stray coin happened by chance to come into one’s possession, it was carefully put away into an old stocking, or some



other safe place, lest its owner should not be able to look upon its like again. Some shinplasters were issued, as there have been at a later period, for change was scarce, and consisted mostly of  $6\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $12\frac{1}{2}$  and 25c. pieces, issued, as I remember, from some Spanish mint. Occasionally one would get hold of a Spanish milled dollar, which was a kind of souvenir, and greatly prized, for its possessor knew it would not shrink in value. American coin was scarce as hens' teeth. Now and then a silver five-franc piece was met with, which was pleasant to look upon in contrast with the depreciated paper which formed the bulk of the circulating medium. Of course, the doing of business with this sort of currency was exceedingly vexatious and hazardous, and everybody prayed for a change of some sort. These calamities had befallen the country during the administration of Mr. Van Buren, which was naturally enough thought to be in some way responsible.

It was while the people were laboring under these great tribulations, when business was at a stand-still, and the future full of doubt and uncertainty, that General Harrison was nominated for president. He had made a good run for the office in 1836, and he was regarded, with reason, as the available man for the position at this particular time. He was in every way unexceptionable, had a good civil and military record, and was one of those men against whom nothing could be said. He was put into the field early—I should say some time during the winter of 1839-40—and was to be a second Moses to deliver his suffering countrymen from their oppression and fill the land with prosperity and plenty. At first his opponents were inclined to make fun of the nomination; he was without qualifications for the office, they averred; he was a quiet, respectable citizen, residing in a log-cabin on the banks of the Ohio river, but too old for president. Of course, they thought the whigs should have taken one of their strong men—Mr. Clay, for example—and not put



at the head of their ticket a feeble old man like General Harrison, feeble in intellect if not in health, and thus made the canvass a respectable one. They ridiculed his military services, and depreciated him in every way. However, they did not suppose his friends had any serious expectations of electing him, else they would have selected a stronger and better man for the office.

Unfortunately for the democrats, these words of detraction just at that time, when the people were laboring under financial difficulties of the gravest character, the outcome of which no man could foresee, reacted, and aided the worthy gentleman at whom they were aimed instead of injuring him. The fact that he was an humble citizen, and the occupant of an humble dwelling, was not an objection to him in the estimation of the common people, who thought they would prefer such a man at the head of the nation to one who had occupied a larger space in the public eye. In fact, the nomination just suited them. It was hailed with satisfaction by all the opponents of the administration from the moment it was made public. "Anybody but Van Buren," was the cry. "Anything for a change; things can not possibly be worse than they now are; let us try new men." As early as March, before the disappearance of snow and ice, the people began to hold mass meetings, and they were largely attended. Some went from curiosity, but a vast majority "meant business." They were intent upon having a change in the administration of the federal government. Very soon the poets, catching inspiration from the spirit which appeared to have taken possession of the masses of earnest voters, began to write songs, which were at once set to music, and shortly after the people were singing them, and with all the energy and power that characterized an old-time camp-meeting. Indeed, there was more of the camp-meeting about all

the whig gatherings held in 1840 than anything else I can liken them to.

And here I want to suggest the inquiry, whether poesy and songs are not the outgrowth of special conditions of the public mind—perhaps I should say of the prevalence of certain great evils afflicting the race or country which can not be fully portrayed or characterized in speeches of prose. There was a time, as all know, when “plantation melodies” were exceedingly popular all through the free states, and the sweetness of the music has never been excelled, if equalled. But since the abolition of slavery and enfranchisement of the blacks they have all gone into disuse, and the time is not distant when they will be wholly forgotten. Did they not grow out of the condition of affairs prior to the war?

The singing of songs became common early in the campaign, and did not cease until the close. Indeed, the meetings became more and more enthusiastic during the summer months and between the first of September and election day. The holding of mass meetings was the principal occupation of the supporters of Harrison and Tyler. And such meetings! No one ever saw the like before. They were attended by men, women and children. They came in vehicles of all descriptions. The procession was sometimes miles in length. In almost every settlement a log-cabin had been erected, and this, put upon wheels and filled with people, occupied a conspicuous place in the procession. Sometimes there were half a dozen or more of them in line, drawn, perhaps, by a dozen yoke of oxen. Then there were canoes, sometimes filled entirely with young ladies, dressed in white and gaily decorated in red and blue ribbons. These processions were simply immense, and of the most imposing character. Everybody was jubilant, save the poor “loco focos,” as the friends of the administration were styled, who were sick at heart and cross. Nothing short of a

public square or a ten-acre lot was sufficient to accommodate one of the monster gatherings, and there were such in every important town in the northern states. General James Wilson, a tall, well-built orator, "all the way from the granite hills of New Hampshire," was a favorite speaker at all the principal points in the north, east and west. His was an imposing figure, and he delivered a powerful address. He had a voice that could be heard as far as a steam gong, and he made a speech that afforded the greatest satisfaction to his auditors. He was, however, only one of the great speakers called into service by the state of affairs. There were numerous orators at all the great meetings. It was an easy matter to make a speech in that campaign. All one had to do was to voice the prevalent feeling; to declare that the people were tired of loco foco rule, and demanded a change. Between the speeches there was singing, singing by the vast concourse assembled, and with an earnestness and enthusiasm rarely equalled. Imagine the effect of these words set to music, as full of action and power as the words themselves :

"O what has caused this great commotion,  
Motion, motion,  
The country through?  
It is the ball a-rolling on  
For Tippecanoe and Tyler, too,  
And with it we'll beat little Van.  
Van, Van, is a used-up man."

I should have said that Mr. Van Buren was nominated by his party for re-election in May or June, and accepted the nomination in a graceful letter, replete with words of wisdom and soberness. Perhaps he and his friends did not at the time dream they were to be beaten—nay, buried under a mountain of whig majorities, but it was manifest by the middle of summer to all impartial observers that the political tempest raging through the country was destined to sweep all before it. In truth,

nothing could withstand its fury, and the thing for people to do was to either plunge into the swift moving current and go with it, or retire to some secure place and allow it to pass. As soon as the fall elections began to be held, it was plainly "all day" with Mr. Van Buren. It should here be remarked, that previous to 1848 the presidential electors were elected at different times, in many of the states, from the first of September to the middle of November. Still, he did not become nervous, or if he did, no one ever knew it. Conscious of having tried to perform his duty, and having an abiding faith in the justice of the cause with which he was identified, he remained calm and firm to the end.

It is needless to describe in detail the occurrences in the memorable campaign of 1840, sometimes spoken of as the "hard cider campaign." It was famous for its immense meetings, for its big processions, and for the enthusiasm of the men who were bound that there should be "a change." The earnestness of the mass of whig voters amounted to fanaticism. They declined to reason with those differing from them, and answered arguments by hurrahs for their nominees. The contest was simply a negative one; on the part of the opposition it was a contest of undying hostility to Van Buren and all the measures of his administration. They were for "a change," and that was all. What was done in Jefferson county was done in all the other counties in the state, and in all the counties in the free states. Every principal town had its log-cabin, its coons and its cider barrel, the contents of which loyal men of the party were all invited to partake of.

At some of the great central points there were immense gatherings, attended by people from a long distance, in spite of the difficulties of making the journey, for it will be remembered that there were few railroads at that time. There was a meeting at Syracuse, which

was addressed by General Wilson, Tom Corwin and "Solitude" Ewing of Ohio, and many others. A log-cabin was brought to the meeting, all the way from the Buckeye state, with several live coons crawling about the concern. It was a tremendous show, attended by fifty thousand people, all wearing Tippecanoe badges and log-cabin breast-pins. There was a wilderness of banners, and mottoes without number, on some of which were the words "\$2 a day and roast beef." Banners of this kind were common, but there were hundreds of others, all intended to hit off some fault of Van Buren, and encourage people to expect better times when he should be driven from his position.

"What were the supporters of the administration doing all this time?" the reader may ask. What could they do? They held meetings, and said they were large ones, but they were not. Most of them were slim affairs, and more like a funeral than a live gathering of enthusiastic men. The truth was, they were dumbfounded, disgusted, and amazed. They saw they could make no headway against the great tidal wave that was sweeping over the country, and stood aside, awaiting the arrival of the election day, determined to sustain their ticket, however badly it might be beaten.

And so the storm moved on, with increasing velocity and strength, until the voting was finished, and it was found that Harrison and Tyler had been chosen president and vice president, and that poor Van Buren was nowhere—literally a "used-up man." He carried only two northern states, New Hampshire and Illinois, and five southern, viz: Virginia, Alabama, Arkansas, Missouri and South Carolina.



## CHAPTER LXIV.

Outcome of the Election in 1840—Death of President Harrison—Tyler Becomes President, and Goes Back on the Policy of His Party.

Over the result of the election in 1840 the whigs were delighted beyond the power of expression. They were unrestrained in their demonstrations of satisfaction. Their joy was unbounded. To say that their opponents were utterly paralyzed and hopeless, is putting it very mildly. They had been so badly beaten as to leave them without a ray of hope. They were inconsolable in their depression. Had they been overthrown in a square, stand-up fight they would have felt differently. But to be howled and hurrahed and sung down was too much for them. They felt that the country and all it contained of value was gone. The writer can speak from experience, as he was one of the mourners. The democrats were deeply, dreadfully blue.

On the 4th of March, 1841, General Harrison was sworn in as president. He held the office one month. He took a cold while being inaugurated, from which he became seriously ill, and from that sickness he did not recover. John Tyler then became president. This was an occurrence that had not been looked for. While the whigs had been singing songs for "Tippecanoe and Tyler too," they did not know a great deal about either, especially the latter, their chief ambition being to make true the words, "Van, Van, is a used-up man." The democrats had stated over and over again during the canvass that Mr. Tyler was hostile to a national bank, which the whigs were generally supposed to favor, and were answered by a "hurrah for Tip." Now, however, it became



a matter of grave concern with the men who had been instrumental in giving him the office he was in, whether he still adhered to the opinions he had formerly expressed with regard to such an institution. It was assumed that he agreed with the whig leaders, Clay, Webster, Ewing, Botts and the rest, and at the special session of congress, convened the 31st of May, a bill to incorporate a national bank was promptly introduced and passed. This was the first step in the program for remedying the evils under which the country was laboring. The president vetoed it on a variety of grounds. He regarded it as unwarranted by the constitution and at war with state rights. He, however, intimated that a bill might be prepared that would meet his approval. But the veto filled all the whig leaders with consternation and wrath, and they were with difficulty restrained from making open war upon him. Yet, thinking there might still be a chance for securing their pet measure, a national bank, they smothered their feelings of indignation and passed a second bill. This met the same fate as the first, and satisfied the men who had achieved the brilliant victory at the preceding election that their "cake was dough," and that they might better have been beaten. In the meantime, the sub-treasury law, passed during the administration of Mr. Van Buren, had been repealed, and the fiscal operations of the government were carried on through the treasury department.

Of course, the whig party was utterly demoralized. The tremendous victory they had gained in the election of Harrison and Tyler had turned out a complete abortion. The men who had done so much singing for their standard-bearers now "sung out of the other corner of their mouths." They indulged in a great deal of profanity. They cursed Mr. Tyler and themselves for being so short-sighted as to vote for a man whose position they did not know or care to know. They denounced him as a traitor

and ingrate. They considered that he was weak-minded, wholly without qualifications for the high station to which he had been elevated. Did they have the sympathy of the men whom they hurraed down? Not much. The democrats, who had been so despondent for a few months, were now in high spirits. They chuckled over the miscarriage of the schemes of their opponents. They rejoiced in their discomfiture. The whigs had ridden into power on a whirlwind of excitement, but were now completely prostrate. They were powerless for good or harm. Yet they could blame only themselves. They were careful not to commit themselves in favor of the re-establishment of a national bank during the campaign; in fact, they declined to commit themselves to anything save "a change," so they had nothing to complain of. Had they made a square fight for Mr. Clay and the measures he was well known to favor, and won, they would have been in a shape to make practical their wishes. Whether they would have succeeded with Mr. Clay, of course can never be known. It is not improbable they would, but this the convention which nominated General Harrison did not know. It considered Harrison more available, and so he was taken, with the result known.

Politicians ought to learn two things from this lesson: first, to make a manly fight for the measures favored, with men known to be for them; second, to be sure that the nominees for president and vice president, as well as for governor and lieutenant governor, accord in sentiment. Then if the chief magistrate happens to die or get killed, his place will be filled by one who will adhere to the policy to which the party is committed.

When it was ascertained that Mr. Tyler was immovably against a national bank, the whigs dropped him like a hot poker, and he set himself at work to organize a party of his own. Democrats in office were allowed to

remain if they were willing to be considered good Tyler men. Some whigs, who had been given office upon the retirement of Mr. Van Buren, were turned out, and Tyler's friends put in their places. In fact, the public service was substantially "Tylerized." The affairs of the government were conducted by the president and his son Robert, commonly spoken of as "Bob." They had a very respectable looking party on paper. They could get up conventions in which there were numerous strong men. The Tyler movement really appeared to possess a good deal of strength, and it would have been formidable if the men engaged in it had represented anybody outside of themselves. But a party made up of office-holders is a slim concern. The men composing it are not reliable. Mr. Tyler's friends in office did not stand by him. Most of them dropped him when they found he could no longer serve them, and went over to the democracy. So at the conventions which nominated a successor to President Tyler they were mainly found with one or the other of the two great parties. Some of them may have made a show of being for Tyler, but they were really for some one else. I do not remember whether he received any votes in the democratic convention, but I am very certain that he obtained none in the whig convention. The men who elected him had had enough of "Tyler, too;" quite enough.

The remarkable campaign of 1840, the most extraordinary one that has ever been witnessed in this country, resulted in an inglorious failure. The success of Harrison and Tyler was a stupendous fizzle. Nothing was done by the Tyler administration to improve the currency and make the times better. It is to be said, however, that the times were gradually improving; people were extricating themselves from financial difficulties by paying up as far as they were able, and business was getting upon its feet once more, all of which shows

that the people will take care of themselves without help from the government if allowed to do it and given time. They require a stable currency, one as nearly equivalent to gold and silver as practicable, and if they can have that they will manage the rest. Entirely too much is expected from the government. Its office is to protect the person and property of each citizen from the greed and avarice of other citizens, to see that all have their just rights. This would appear to be a very simple affair ; nevertheless the business is attended with very great expense, as those who pay taxes can attest.

## CHAPTER LXV.

The Campaign of 1844—Candidates of the Two Parties—Polk Against Clay—The Issues Involved.

In contemplating the situation, after the disastrous rout of the party in 1840, democrats were forcibly reminded of the inquiry made by the prophet Ezekiel, when he saw in a vision the deadness of the Israelites in their captive and scattered condition. "Shall these dry bones live?" This was a debatable question for a time, but the defection of Tyler changed the aspect of affairs, and led some of the more sanguine among them to feel that there might still be some vitality in the said "dry bones," and that at the proper time an effort had better be made to retrieve their lost fortunes.

Accordingly in 1843 inquiries began to be made, "What will the democrats do a year hence? Will they make a nomination for president; and if so, who will they nominate?" As the democratic party was at that time no more inclined to "give up the ghost" than it is at present, there was a general feeling among the masses in favor of giving their old antagonists "another whack," notwithstanding the tremendous drubbing they had received three years before. But who would be their standard-bearer? In this state the leaders of the party generally thought it would be only fair to let Mr. Van Buren have the nomination, averring that he had been beaten by a "howling mob," and that it was no way likely the thing could be repeated. There was, however, a strong minority, composed to a large extent of the younger portion of the party, who preferred the selection



of a new man, not because they had any objection to Mr. Van Buren, but having been once beaten with him, in fact, very nearly annihilated, they judged their chances would be better with a name against whom the enginery of the opposition could not be brought to bear so effectively as against the "Sage of Kinderhook." With this gentleman they felt that they would be half beaten from the opening of the campaign. So they favored the nomination of a fresh candidate. The writer, who was then younger than he is now, took this view of the situation, and urged the naming of a new man. He was anxious to win, and thought the chances would be decidedly better with some one against whom less could be said. It may be added here that Mr. Van Buren was never popular with the masses of his party. His strength was with the politicians rather than with the people. He was high-toned and clean. He was always a gentleman, though by no means an aristocrat; he never went into the slums for votes, and never soiled his garments by dirty jobs of any description.

It was generally expected that Mr. Clay would be the whig candidate, and, as he was the idol of his party, he had more personal friends than any man in the country. I was in favor of bringing some man into the field around whom the party could make a vigorous, earnest and enthusiastic rally. All the charges that had been made against Mr. Van Buren were as valid as they had ever been, and I was tired of replying to them. In a word, I had had enough of defensive warfare, and counselled the nomination of a candidate of fair reputation, who would poll the full strength of the party, and place it in a position to do a little offensive fighting in case Mr. Clay should be in the race.

However, the machine had its way, and the state voted as a unit for Mr. Van Buren in the convention. The body adopted a resolution requiring the nomi-



nee to have the support of two-thirds of the entire convention, and this shut out Mr. Van Buren, who was the leading candidate, though he could not command the necessary two-thirds vote. It has been stated, and a great many doubtless believe, that it was Mr. Van Buren's letter, written a month previous to the assembling of the convention, expressing himself opposed to the annexation of Texas, that defeated him. I do not endorse this opinion. I think the idea which had taken deep root in the public mind, that he could not be chosen, had more to do with shelving him than his position on the Texas question. I did not then believe he could be chosen, and I still think that had he been nominated he would have been beaten—perhaps not as badly as he was in 1840, but still by a sufficient majority. Whether he was right or wrong in regard to the annexation of Texas, it is needless to express an opinion. If the letter cost him a defeat, the fact is to be mentioned to his credit, for it shows that he did not hesitate to make known his convictions, whatever might be the consequences to himself. My own impression is that the annexation of Texas was a wise measure. It had been some ten years a republic, and desired to become a part of the United States. Of course, I understand that the southern states favored annexation, with an eye to the extension of their “peculiar institution,” but they had avowed no such purpose at the time; consequently the question of allowing Texas to become a part of the Union was one which the northern democrats thought should stand upon its own merits. Our government had made repeated efforts to purchase the territory while it was a province of Mexico. If worth buying, it would seem as if there could be no serious objection to obtaining it when it could be acquired without money or price. It had achieved its own independence, and desired to cast its lot with us. Ought we to

allow the applicant to come in? I should answer yes today. So I thought when the question was under discussion. There are few who would now be willing to part with it upon any terms.

To whatever cause Mr. Van Buren's defeat may be chargeable, it is certain that he failed to secure the nomination. After a somewhat protracted session, the convention made choice of James K. Polk of Tennessee. He had been speaker of the house of representatives, and, though never a brilliant man, he had the reputation of being a safe one, and he was, moreover, known to be the trusted friend of ex-President Jackson. The whigs now brought into the field their strongest man, the gallant Henry Clay of Kentucky. This placed that party upon the defensive. No serious objection could be made to Colonel Polk. There was not much known of him, but that fact operated in his favor. His friends were not under the necessity of explaining his conduct or excusing his votes, while Mr. Clay, having been all his life before the public, was handled by his opponents without gloves. They treated him in much the same way as Mr. Van Buren had been treated by his political foes. All his shortcomings were referred to in the democratic papers, and greatly exaggerated, of course.

The convention which nominated Mr. Polk passed a resolution in favor of the annexation of Texas, which he endorsed, while Mr. Clay had written a letter against the measure. This made annexation an important issue in the campaign all through the summer, but before its close Mr. Clay wrote a second letter, declaring that "personally he had no objection to annexation, but would be glad to see it," and this left the two parties in substantial accord upon the question. The tariff, too, was brought into the contest, when the democrats declared in favor of a tariff for revenue, with incidental protection, while the whigs were understood to stand where the

republicans do today, in favor of the policy of protection, without regard to the matter of revenue. Of course, the democrats made the United States bank very prominent, and fought the "monster" and its champion with the greatest desperation. Mr. Clay and his various public acts were assailed with terrible bitterness. The campaign was to a large extent a personal one, and exceedingly animated. Many of the songs which the whigs had sung with such telling effect four years before were appropriated by the democracy, the words changed to suit their purposes, and sung at all their gatherings, and swelled enthusiasm to a high pitch. The whigs also did considerable singing, but their music failed to move the masses as it had done when it came spontaneously as from the inmost depths of the soul. The fact was, the "sag" was against them. The democrats were confident of victory from the hour Colonel Polk's name was substituted for that of Van Buren. In the early part of the canvass some doubt was felt as to what New York would do. The democratic leaders were not satisfied with the dropping of Mr. Van Buren, or affected not to be, while the rank and file were more than satisfied, feeling that a wise thing had been done. After a while the party became reconciled to the action of the convention, and determined to put forth an effort to save the state. To this end they prevailed upon Silas Wright, a devoted friend of Mr. Van Buren, to accept a nomination for governor, and this took the state out of the list of doubtful ones. Mr. Wright was chosen by a majority of upwards of 10,000, while Colonel Polk received something like 5,000. Had the views of the democratic voters been respected in this matter, and the delegates to the national convention allowed to act upon their convictions, the state would very likely have voted for the democratic nominee by a good-sized majority, without the aid rendered by the nomination of Mr. Wright.

As most readers are aware, Colonel Polk was chosen. This ended the contest for an overshadowing national bank, and the democrats were greatly elated. The whigs have always credited the liberty party or abolitionists with their defeat, but with what reason I could never discover. They were not in sympathy with the doctrines of the third party people, who had no more love for Mr. Clay and the measures to which he was committed than they had for those of the democrats.

The election of Polk did not meet the expectations of the men who had labored most earnestly to that end. To secure the good-will of the machine democracy of this state, which had stood solidly for Mr. Van Buren in the convention from which Colonel Polk had received his nomination, and which yielded to this gentleman a reluctant support, Governor Marcy was made secretary of war, and given the distribution of the official patronage in this state. Of course, the offices were generally bestowed upon his particular friends, while the wishes of those who had been active and zealous in their advocacy of Polk's election were disregarded. Very soon they came to be styled "hunkers," because they wanted everything themselves, because of their pig-headed selfishness. This was really the foundation of the democratic quarrels in this state, which became very bitter a year or two later, and, with other causes, defeated Silas Wright when a candidate for re-election, gave the state to the whigs by an overwhelming majority in 1847, and made Zachary Taylor president in 1848.

## CHAPTER LXVI.

Outcome of Polk's Election—The War with Mexico—Acquisition of California and New Mexico—Breaking up of the Democratic Party.

In the closing days of the Tyler administration Texas was admitted into the Union by a joint resolution of congress. This act did not necessarily lead to the war with Mexico, which followed a year or more later, for that grew out of the invasion of territory claimed by Texas by a portion of the Mexican army. As a matter of fact, the Mexican government had not acknowledged the independence of Texas, and did not mean to give up the territory if able to hold it. But Texas having been made a part of the United States, its invasion was a thing not to be tolerated, so there was a small force dispatched to Corpus Christi to guard the American line. As the Mexicans declined to keep off from Uncle Sam's domain, collisions occurred between our forces and those of the Mexicans. The consequence was, our government soon found itself involved in a war with Mexico. It has always appeared to me that this conflict was a matter of accident rather than design on the part of the authorities at Washington. Still, I do not see how it was to have been avoided after the annexation of Texas. We could not do otherwise than protect the territory acquired. In the prosecution of the war the Mexican army was pursued to the city of Mexico, which was occupied by our forces an entire winter. Peace was then concluded, by which California and New Mexico were added to the United States, and the federal forces returned home.



The acquisition of California and New Mexico was of vast importance to the United States, particularly in view of what has since occurred. The finding of gold shortly afterwards in fabulous amounts in the section of country bordering on the Pacific started a stream of emigration thither, which, considering the length and perils of the journey, appears almost incredible. But men went—went by thousands. Some found the gold which they sought, but more did not. A few returned to the states, while the many remained on the Pacific coast to assist in founding an important state. Some amassed wealth and fame.

All this grew out of the war with Mexico, which resulted from the annexation of Texas. Can there be a doubt as to the wisdom of the measure? Nations as well as individuals often “build wiser than they know.”

As a measure for restoring the democratic party to power in the Union, the election of Polk was a failure. In truth, it went to pieces during his administration, and has at no time since been a consolidated organization, based upon principles as before. As already stated, the old-line democrats in this state took the offices, and left the younger portion of the party, who had labored zealously for the election of Polk, to whistle for their compensation. They were dissatisfied. They kicked. They became known as barnburners. Some farmer, it was said, was so annoyed by the rats in his barn, which he tried to be rid of, that he burned the barn. The democratic kickers were willing to destroy the party to overthrow machine rule, to be rid of the bosses. So they were barnburners. They styled their foes old hunkers. The latter had the credit of allowing Silas Wright, who had consented to vacate his seat in the United State senate to save Colonel Polk in this state, to be defeated when a candidate for re-election in 1846. This enraged the radical, or barnburner wing of the democracy, and they



prepared for a fight. The Albany Atlas, which was started about this time, became their organ. I think it was owned by a brother-in-law of John Van Buren, named French, and was edited by William Cassidy, one of the spiciest and most pointed writers the state has ever had. It had sustained the administration of Mr. Wright, who consequently had received the cold shoulder of the Argus and the old hunkers.

The following year the famous Buffalo convention of free-soilers was held, which had the countenance and support of the barnburners of this state, large numbers of whom attended as delegates. It was likewise attended by anti-slavery men and by the disaffected of all political organizations. After a full and free interchange of opinion, it nominated for president Martin Van Buren, and for vice president Charles Francis Adams.

Mr. Oliver Dyer, in his little volume, "Great Senators of the United States Forty Years Ago," tells his readers that this result was reached through the skillful engineering of Benjamin F. Butler, once a noted democratic politician in this state, (not the General Butler of Massachusetts,) William H. Seward and Thurlow Weed, the last two named desiring to make so great a diversion from the regular democratic ticket as to give this state to the whig nominee for president, while Butler, who, it is assumed, was acting for Van Buren, wished to defeat General Cass, then the democratic nominee for president. I know that there are many who entertain this opinion, but I do not subscribe to it. I can discover no good reason why Mr. Van Buren should want to beat Cass. It is true that his name was used in the convention of 1844 after that of Mr. Van Buren was dropped, but there is no evidence that it was done with his consent, and it is certain that he received nowhere near the number of votes given for Mr. Van Buren, and of course he stood no show for the nomination. I think Mr. Van Buren

accepted the nomination of the Buffalo convention against his own inclination. He had declined a nomination tendered him by the barnburner convention held in Utica at an earlier date, and wrote to those who were using his name at Buffalo :

“ You know, from my letter to the second Utica convention, and *the confidence you repose in my sincerity, how greatly the proceedings of that body*, in relation to myself, *were opposed to my earnest wishes.*”

Yet this letter is strangely considered by Mr. Dyer to have been a bid for the nomination of the Buffalo free-soil gathering. I prefer to believe Mr. Van Buren wished the convention to understand, what his language plainly imports, the action of the Utica convention, being “ opposed to his earnest wishes,” he could not with any kind of sincerity consent to the use of his name at Buffalo. Still, I know he was nominated at Buffalo, and that he accepted the nomination, perhaps as the young lady accepted her lover, to get rid of his importunities. That he did it for the purpose of defeating Cass, I do not believe. As the nominee of the hunker wing of the party, Cass never stood the “ ghost of a chance ” of carrying this state. Preston King would have polled the entire barnburner vote, as would almost any of the gentlemen whose names were mentioned at the convention. They were in to beat the men who had trodden upon them, and it made little difference whose name they used to do it with.

It is a noteworthy fact that the men who pretended to be for Van Buren’s nomination in 1844 were against him in 1848, while those who thought he had better stand aside than to be a second time defeated were his supporters in the free-soil campaign.

## CHAPTER LXVII.

Preceding the War Period—Outline of American Political History from 1849 to 1860—The Taylor-Fillmore Administration—The Democracy Unite—The Whigs Quarrel and Lose the Advantage Gained—The Contests in 1852, 1856 and 1860—Organization of the Republican Party.

General Taylor took the office of president the 4th of March, 1849. Although not much of a party man, he was whig enough to oust the democratic office-holders and fill their places with persons belonging to the organization to which he owed his election. This left the democrats, who had held a good share of the federal offices for a period of nearly half a century, out in the cold. As they had by their quarrels brought this state of things upon themselves, the old party war-horses set on foot movements for reuniting the discordant elements, and, after considerable correspondence, a state convention was called, to be composed of hunkers and barnburners in equal numbers, to arrange a platform upon which both factions could stand and make a state ticket that both could support. This convention was held at Rome, I think in 1850, and the hatchet buried, so far as the leaders of the party could bury it. A single ticket was put in nomination in the fall of 1850, which was headed by Horatio Seymour (hunker) for governor, and Sanford E. Church (barnburner) for lieutenant. The latter was chosen, while the former was defeated by the meagre majority of between 200 and 300.

Two years later a mighty effort was made by the reunited democracy to recover the power they had lost by their divisions, and it was so far successful that they elected their candidate for president, Franklin Pierce,

and Horatio Seymour was chosen governor by a handsome plurality. But the hunkers, it was said, took most of the best-paying offices, both state and national, perhaps because they were the more reliable of the two factions, and had never been guilty of organizing a square bolt. So the barnburners took little stock in President Pierce.

I should remark here that General Taylor did not live to serve out his full term. He died on the 9th of July, 1850, and Millard Fillmore became president. For some reason he was not in full accord with Thurlow Weed, Governor Seward and other whigs who were understood to engineer the affairs of this party in this state, and a bitter fight grew up between the latter and the president's particular friends. I presume the differences related to the distribution of the official patronage. Mr. Fillmore, finding himself president, probably felt it to be his duty to discharge the functions of the office according to his own best judgment, without special regard to the advice of Mr. Weed, who was supposed to consider his wishes the law of the party in matters of party policy in the state of New York. Whatever the cause of the estrangement of the president and his whig friends in his own state, the inharmony was very serious, and did much to render the success of Mr. Seymour possible, and to give the electoral vote of the state to General Pierce. The whig party was almost as badly factionized as the democratic organization had been. The friends of Seward and Weed were styled "woolly heads," while the supporters of the president were called "silver grays." Many of the latter went over to the democracy, and became and have remained until this day the stiffest and most ultra members of the democratic organization it has had. So the issue of the contest of 1852 did not show the strength of the old political parties very accurately in this state. Great numbers of

barnburners either refrained from voting or voted for the liberty party nominee, John P. Hale, while possibly as many silver gray whigs voted against General Scott, the whig candidate. This distinguished military officer, who was styled by his opponents "old fuss and feathers," was badly beaten in the Union, for he carried only four states, viz: Kentucky, Massachusetts, Tennessee and Vermont. This result demoralized the whigs, who never undertook to rally again as a party. The American, better known as the "know-nothing" party, soon after came into existence, and had quite a run in some of the states. It was formidable in this, even electing several state officers one year, and came near electing its nominee for governor in 1854, when Myron H. Clark, who had the support of the temperance people, pulled through by 309 plurality.

The presidential contest in 1852, being mainly a struggle for the federal offices, the democrats won, and those who were so fortunate as to receive appointments were happy, but the administration of General Pierce was not a brilliant success. The different elements in the democratic party were far from being harmonious. Those who had gone into the free-soil movement in 1848 continued to be free-soilers; that is, they were opposed to the extension of the institution of slavery outside of the states in which it existed. I was myself one of those free-soilers, for I never did like slavery.

So I became separated from the democratic party—on the slavery question. Two and a half years after the inauguration of General Pierce, (in the fall of 1855,) the republican party was organized in this state, and I went into it, with the great body of my barnburner and free-soil brethren. The name being identical with that of the party to which I had originally belonged, and for whose success I had labored earnestly a good many years, it did not occur to me that I occupied any new position so far as principles were concerned.



There was no pretense that Mr. Jefferson, who, more than any other single individual, was regarded as the founder of the old republican party, had the least sympathy with the institution of slavery, for, in speaking of it, he declared that he "trembled when he remembered that God was just;" and it is certain that he was strongly opposed to its extension; and that was the position of the new republican party. It declared itself unalterably opposed to slavery and its extension. That was the main plank in its platform, and continued to be for many years. In truth, it was made up of the anti-slavery men in both the old parties, while its members were materially augmented by the men who had voted the abolition and liberty party tickets.

The campaign of 1856 was a three-cornered affair. The old democratic party supported James Buchanan for president, the silver gray whigs and the American party, or know-nothing politicians, Millard Fillmore, while the new republican party made a gallant fight for John C. Fremont. As is known, Mr. Buchanan won, but New York rolled up a magnificent vote for the republican standard-bearer, it being 276,007, or 80,129 larger than that of Buchanan, and within 44,475 of the vote of Buchanan and Fillmore combined. In the Union Mr. Buchanan's vote was only 496,908 larger than Fremont's, while he (Buchanan) lacked 377,629 of receiving a majority of the popular vote.

During Mr. Buchanan's administration the southern leaders were preparing for the rebellion, which was actively set on foot near its close. The acquisition of California and New Mexico, and the admission of the former as a free state, together with the exclusion of slavery from Nebraska and Kansas, satisfied the slaveholders that slavery was doomed unless the Union could be sundered and the southern states permitted to set up a government of their own. Slavery was effectually barred



out of the north and west, but with Texas belonging to the southern government, and susceptible of being carved into half a dozen states, it was thought the institution could be maintained and made profitable for an indefinite period. So members of Mr. Buchanan's cabinet were busy during a greater part of the four years Mr. Buchanan was in office in maturing plans for the overthrow of the national government and for setting up a second one at the south. And it is almost a miracle that they did not succeed. The means of the government were employed in aid of their purposes, and the president never laid a straw in their way. Whether ignorant of what was going on, or afraid of offending by utterances of disapproval, can never be known. Certain it is he appeared to acquiesce in the treasonable doings of members of his cabinet, allowed them to perfect their plans, and then vacate their places as if they had labored to aid him in the discharge of duties he had obligated himself before heaven to perform. His secretary of the treasury, Howell Cobb, secretary of war, John B. Floyd, and secretary of the interior, Jacob Thompson, were all permitted to retire early in January, 1861, when it was evident to everybody but the president that their purpose was to assist in the founding of a government independent of the one of which they had been important officers. In the light of history it looks as if they had chloroformed the occupant of the white-house so that he might be kept insensible of the heinousness of their diabolical transactions. Once rid of them, however, he awoke from his drowsiness sufficiently to fill their places with men loyal to the stars and stripes. When he placed General Dix at the head of the treasury department he put the right man in the right place. Democrat as he was, he was a patriot through and through; and Joe Holt, who was made secretary of war, though a Kentuckian, was never suspected of infidelity to the government. These

appointments reflect credit upon the administration of Mr. Buchanan, and deserve special mention, because they, in a measure, redeem it from the loathing and disgust that must be entertained for it in the breast of every loyal citizen. As a whole, it was unspeakably stupid and inefficient. When the rebellion finally broke out, he was credited with saying that "while the acts of the secessionists were wholly illegal, he could find no authority in the constitution for arresting them."

When Mr. Buchanan retired from office the democrats went out of power under the old government, and they remained in the minority for most if not all the time until Mr. Cleveland was chosen president in 1884. But they had little reason for complaint. They had enjoyed the federal offices for nearly sixty years. During the four years in which Taylor and Fillmore were at the head of affairs the democrats were generally obliged to walk the plank, but with that exception their opponents had had little chance at the public crib from 1800 to 1861.

At the date last mentioned, Abraham Lincoln came into power, having been chosen the previous fall. The democrats had two candidates in the field against Mr. Lincoln—Stephen A. Douglas and John C. Breckinridge. The latter was vice president while Mr. Buchanan was president. The southern democracy felt that it would not be safe to trust the "Little Giant," as Mr. Douglas was called, although he had endeavored to please them by securing a division of the territory of Nebraska and giving them a chance to convey their property into one of the states thus formed, Kansas. This was to be effected under his doctrine of "squatter sovereignty," the import of which was that the fellows who got into the territory first, whether they held slaves or didn't, if able to maintain their grip, should determine the character

of the territory. His own position was defined by the declaration that he "didn't care whether slavery was voted up or voted down." This lost him the favor of the south. They could not trust a man who was willing that their pet institution should be "voted down." They were uncompromising. Douglas was a compromiser. He would extend to the free citizens of the north the same privileges and rights he would to the southern slaveholders, and vice versa. So he was unsound.

They were right in their estimate of Douglas. He could not have been depended upon to aid the southern politicians in the work of overthrowing the government. He was in thorough sympathy with Mr. Lincoln in his measures to support the government, and no doubt would have pursued a course similar to the one adopted had he been chosen in Mr. Lincoln's stead. Douglas was a politician and ambitious; he would have liked to be president; but he was a true patriot.

And the treatment Douglas received at the hands of his friends at the south forces me to say that such a sentiment as gratitude, I judge, never entered the southern heart. The representatives of that section of the Union had great respect for northern men just so far and so long as they were willing to serve them. But the instant they paid the least deference to the sentiments of the north they regarded them as inimical, and treated them accordingly. Any man not for them, and not prepared to acquiesce in all their requirements, was considered as against them and not to be trusted. Mr. Van Buren lessened his hold upon his northern friends when he promised in his inaugural message to veto a bill for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, which belonged to the north as much as it did to the south; but, because he was not willing that Texas should

be annexed when to his apprehension the object was to extend slavery, he was placed in the category with William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Philips and other avowed abolitionists. Horace Greeley inflicted irreparable damage upon his good name by volunteering to sign the bail bond of Jeff. Davis, so that he might be released from prison ; but I never heard that Davis ever even thanked him for the great sacrifice he made. There was something about the owner of slave property that rendered him callous to a sentiment of gratitude.

## CHAPTER LXVIII.

Albany Editors—J. Wesley Smith, Edwin Croswell, Henry H. Van Dyck, Thurlow Weed, Daniel Manning, George Dawson, and Others.

J. Wesley Smith, of the Albany Argus, who died a few years ago, I knew well when he was a young man, perhaps thirty years old. He reported the proceedings of the assembly for the Argus. He was a courteous, pleasant gentleman, and popular with the members. He was a small man, and became one of the proprietors of the Argus, I should say, at the time Dan Manning did. He was on the Argus editorial staff between twenty and thirty years. What special department he looked after I do not know. He was a ready writer, and though something of a politician, I think did not write many of the heavy editorials in the Argus.

And since I have spoken of one of the Albany editors whom I have known, perhaps I had better say something of the others. Edwin Croswell was the editor of the Argus when I came into the state, in 1833, and remained on the paper until about the time it was consolidated with the Atlas, an evening daily, started by French & Cassidy somewhere about 1842, I think. Mr. Croswell I have heretofore described. He was the editor-in-chief of the Argus, and was assisted, I have always understood, by Governor Marcy, General Dix, and others.

Hon. Henry H. Van Dyck, having served four years in the senate from the second district, embracing the county of Orange, from which he hailed, settled in Albany about 1841, and became associate editor of the Argus. He was a man of respectable talents, solid rather than brilliant. In person he resembled the late General

Hungerford of Adams. Just how long he was with Croswell I do not remember; but when the democratic party split he went with the radicals or barnburners, and ultimately was one of the conductors of the Atlas. He was for four years superintendent of public instruction, four years superintendent of the banking department, and a presidential elector in 1856. He was rather popular, but just why I never could make out. I knew him pretty well for years, but never felt really acquainted with him.

Mr. S. M. Shaw, of the Cooperstown Journal, was afterwards on the Argus, but I never knew him. I knew William Cassidy very intimately while he was at the head of the Atlas, and esteemed him highly. He was an agreeable man socially, very, but was too positive in his likes and dislikes to be a general favorite. He was tall and slim when I first knew him, but became stout and heavy before he died. He had a ruddy complexion and dark hair, and seemed the picture of robust health. He was a sharp, incisive writer, a trifle too acrimonious, but he came upon the political stage at a time when earnest if not caustic speech appeared to be demanded. He was exceedingly bitter toward Croswell and all other old hunkers, but a warm friend to all enjoying his confidence. After the Argus and Atlas became one, and Mr. Cassidy the principal editor, he went with the democracy, and I with the republicans, and so we saw little of each other. He formed new associates, and so did I, but I never ceased to have great respect for him as a man and writer.

The Argus at one time was under the editorial management of Calvert Comstock, and it appears to me his brother Elon was with him, though I am not positive. The latter started a daily paper at Springfield, Mass., and was subsequently connected with the New York Journal of Commerce, being on that paper in 1859. Both the Comstocks were most estimable gentlemen.



The Argus had hard sledding for several years after Croswell left it, but it finally fell into the hands of William Cassidy, Daniel Manning and J. Wesley Smith, (if I remember right,) became the state paper, and made lots of money. In fact, all three proprietors, it is understood, became rich—not millionaires, but well off. All three have passed away.

Daniel Manning was a practical printer, and when Dudley Farling went to Oswego, in 1853, to take editorial charge of the Oswego Palladium, he resigned the position of foreman of the Argus, and Manning took his place. He afterwards went into the counting-room, and I judge was the business manager of the establishment when it was in the height of prosperity. I knew Manning, not intimately, but quite well. His intellect was heavy and sluggish, like Cleveland's, but he was, no doubt, a man of great good sense and good business talents. I have met him repeatedly at the meetings of the state associated press, but do not remember to have heard him open his head there, in the way of suggestion or otherwise. He was a very different man from Governor Hill, who represented the Elmira Gazette at these meetings, and who was oftener on his feet and had more to say than all the rest. I take it Manning had some of the qualities of the late General Grant. He listened while others talked; was slow in making up his mind, but when once made up it was not easily changed. In other words, he was immovable as a rock. But few persons, knowing Dan Manning as foreman in the Argus composing-room, with his sleeves rolled up, and wearing a leather apron, would have expected to see him occupying the position of secretary of the treasury—to see him standing in the footsteps of Alexander Hamilton, Albert Gallatin, Levi Woodbury, John C. Spencer, Robert J. Walker, Hugh McCullough, and the late Charles J. Folger. But strange things do happen in this democratic

country. Manning, I presume, did not pretend to be a writer. It is doubtful if he ever wrote an editorial article in his life.

Thurlow Weed, of the Evening Journal, I never knew intimately, and for that reason I prefer to say little about him. He wrote his autobiography; it contains many, very many interesting things, and I advise those who care to know about him to obtain the volume, or volumes, (for there are two containing his history and correspondence,) and give it a perusal. He exercised great political influence in this state for a long time.

George Dawson, his associate, I knew well and respected highly. He was a writer of ability, and made a capital speech. Everybody liked George Dawson, for he was a true man. He attended to his own affairs, and did not meddle with those of others. He came to his office in good season, read the news, wrote editorials and read the proofs, and then retired to the bosom of his family. He performed a vast amount of editorial labor in his life-time. He liked agriculture, and owned an excellent farm in Michigan, from which he obtained the flour he used. He spent his vacations in fishing, for which he had a great passion, and there are few streams in the northern states that did not receive a visit from Dawson. He was a religious man, a member of the Baptist church, and looked after the interests of the Sabbath school. He was an excellent man in all the relations of life, and the world was better for his having lived in it. Weed and Dawson were the conductors of the Journal some thirty years—the latter not continuously; he was absent in Michigan for a short time, got rich and retired from the concern. Mr. Dawson was made postmaster of Albany, and held the office four years, I believe.

They were succeeded in the Journal by George W. Demers, who came to Albany from the Troy Times, and

who was one of the most brilliant journalists we have ever had in the state. He was a fine writer, and excelled as a reporter. It is stated that he would listen to a lecture in the evening, and, without writing a single word or making a note, write out a verbatim report for publication the following day. He was raised at Sand Lake, I think, and preached there for a time after he had been employed on the Troy Times. He was a fine-looking man, with pleasant and genial manners, and a kindly expression in his countenance. He was in the Journal when Tweed was in the legislature and "boss" there, and it is understood that he was seriously damaged by his connections with the New York thief. But he died before Tweed fell into disgrace, and it is but charitable to hope that he was misjudged.

Stephen C. Hutchins was with Demers in the Journal, a man of considerable ability in certain ways. He left Albany and went to Rochester to become managing editor of the Rochester Democrat. From Rochester he returned to Albany, and took the same position on the Argus. He finally became a writer on the Albany Express, and was there when he died. He compiled the New York "Civil List," and did the work so admirably as to deserve the gratitude of every newspaper man in the state. I think he was the author of some other volumes, but I have forgotten what they were. He was a careful, painstaking man, and like Demers, a Baptist. He died in middle life.

After Demers and Hutchins came Charles E. Smith, another brilliant young man of education and fine tastes. He made his debut on the Albany Express, and was a warm supporter of Governor Fenton. After he went into the Journal he went over to Mr. Conkling and the stalwarts. He was finally ousted from the Journal, when he went to Philadelphia and became the managing editor of the Philadelphia Press, Forney's old paper.

Here he became a half-breed, and has made the Press one of the brightest, newsiest and most efficient republican journals in the country. Smith also was a Baptist, from which it would seem that the journal has somehow drawn to it several gentlemen belonging to that respectable church and denomination. At the time of writing this, Smith is our minister to Russia.

Another gentleman at one time connected with the Journal was Sam Wilkeson, who wielded a brilliant pen. He afterwards went to New York, and I think to Washington, where he became a correspondent of the New York press.

After Smith left the Journal Mr. Dawson again assumed the editorship of that paper, and did some very excellent work. When he retired, Harold Frederic, of Utica, took his place, and wrote some of the best articles that have ever been written for that paper. But he argued in favor of free trade, or a moderate tariff, and that did not suit a portion of the patrons of the Journal; so he was prevailed on to vacate the editorial chair. Since then he has been the European correspondent of the New York Times. Soon after this the paper passed into the hands of a stock company, and a son of Senator Arkell, now a proprietor of Frank Leslie's, became the publisher, and John A. Sleicher the managing editor.

I cannot conclude this article, which is already longer than I dreamed of making it, without at least mentioning the names of three or four other gentlemen connected with the Albany press, whom I have personally known and still know such as are living. The first is Mr. Callcott of the Times, who gets up a capital newspaper, and whose editorials I always read with genuine satisfaction. Then there is Mr. Keyes, formerly of the Express, a pungent writer of no mean ability; also Jacob Cuyler of the same paper, one of your live, wide-awake men, who

can say better and worse things than any man in Albany. Then there was Hugh Hastings of the Albany Knickerbocker, who is alleged to have amassed a fortune as a lobbyist ; and last, and not least, are Messrs. Rooker and Farrell, of the Press and Knickerbocker, two estimable gentlemen, who understand their business from A to Z, who make an excellent and thoroughly live journal, and who are prospering, as such newspaper men ought to and almost always do.

## CHAPTER LXIX.

Popular Government—Value of Unprejudiced Political Writing—The True Philosophy and Practice of Politics.

“Those who employ their pens,” says an eminent writer on political subjects, “free from party rage and party prejudices, cultivate a science which of all others contributes most to public utility.”

The reminiscences I am giving are chiefly political, because for a period of fifty years I have devoted a large share of my time to politics, and written voluminously on the subject. I don't think I have ever been a politician, in the common acceptation of the word, for though I have been in my day a strong party man, and wanted my side to win, I have not been willing that other than legitimate and honest methods should be employed to achieve victory. I have wished my party to succeed because its objects appeared to me to be more beneficent and its aims higher than those of the opposite one. A party name never commanded any particular respect from me. I desired to know what it stood for, and whether the men answering to this or that appellation were patriotic, loyal to the right, and humane, whether they loved their fellow mortals and desired their moral and political elevation—desired to see them prosperous and happy and qualified to care for and govern themselves.

A politician, in my judgment, should be one versed in state craft—familiar with the operations of the government under which he lives and for whose character he is in some measure responsible. He should be a statesman, and not a seeker of official position. These opinions I



have entertained and freely proclaimed during my entire editorial life. I have not been ambitious to lead people, but I have tried to give them the truth as it presented itself to me, give it to them to cogitate upon and revolve in their own minds, so that they might learn to lead themselves. I have tried to help men to rule themselves, tried to make rulers of all who exercise the elective franchise.

The masses do not appear to understand it, but it is nevertheless true, that all the good which human government can bestow is of a negative character, and consists in prevention rather than cure, in protecting the community from foreign aggression, and in restraining the individual members from aggressions on each other. The functions of the general government are very well defined by the federal constitution, and strictly adhered to, are quite limited. Our people got along tolerably well under it for nearly a hundred years. A few would have been glad to find in it larger authority, but, respecting the wise and patriotic men who framed it, they acquiesced and were willing that it should stand in the way it had been left. On one question there appears to have been a difference of opinion. There were men in the southern states who maintained that any state might secede from the Union at will. That question was put at rest by the late war. It has been decided that the government has the right to save its own life. To protect itself, therefore, from those who would destroy it at home as well as from foreign aggression, while it manages its own concerns, looks after the national interests, provides for the common defense and promotes the general welfare, appoints a sufficient number of agents to attend to these duties, and provides means for paying them, are the main things required from the national government. The less it does in the way of popular legislation the better. That business should be left to the states and local governments as far as practicable.

Our people are too much governed. Our legislatures do a great deal more than they ought to do ; and, not content with the mischief they perform, they create numerous commissions, and license them to prey upon private interests. Now, if the great office of government is to restrain men from injuring one another, to instruct each individual as to the sphere he shall occupy, and keep him in it, where is the need of all the legislation we have ? We nominally govern ourselves ; then why not let us do it ? Why commission so many person to help in the matter, and require us to pay them for their services ? Every man ought to be educated to govern himself, and if he were, the hordes of officials who are helping him to govern himself, and paid liberally for doing it, might be dispensed with.

Of course, I understand that every man is not made for a leader ; that there are those who have no ambition to lead, who prefer to follow than to lead ; but this is to some extent the fault of our educational system ; the child has not been taught to think for himself, has not been educated to have opinions of his own, has not been taught that the very best person in the world to lean upon and trust is himself. But it must be that our schools are improving ; more children are learning to think, and so learning the mistake of leaning upon others, learning to lean upon themselves and lead themselves, learning how they may become men and women and the equals of other men and women. It is at least true that the masses in community are informing themselves as they never did before ; they are reading more books and more magazines ; they are reading more newspapers—daily newspapers especially, which chronicle the world's doings from day to day, and in a way that people from necessity talk about them, necessarily form opinions ; crude they may be, but they are still opinions ; and whoever has opinions and expresses them

is becoming educated, becoming developed, and in a measure qualified to lead himself.

In our government every man needs to understand that he is a part of it; the government is *his* government; it is his as much as it is that of the president of the United States, or of the governor of the state, or of the member of congress or the legislature, or of the judge of the supreme court, or the sheriff. The government doesn't belong to the office-holders any more than it does to the men out of office. It belongs to all of us, and it is just what we please to make it. It is a good government, an economical government, one from which the people may derive some benefit, if they so will; but let them give it little or no attention, let them fail to keep informed in governmental matters, let them get the impression that the government does not belong to them, that some one else has more interest in it than they have, let them neglect their duty as citizens, never go to the caucus, and when they attend the polls go there to help one of the political parties to elect its ticket, to oblige some personal friend who is a candidate for an office, or to gratify a prejudice they may have against some party or individual, and the chances are that the government will be badly administered, and a curse instead of a blessing. In a word, the government is good or bad as the people may elect to have it. If bad, it is altogether their fault; if good, they are entitled to the credit.

These truths cannot be too often stated. They should be dwelt upon by every instructor of youth, by instructors of all kinds. The people want to understand that what is called government is a kind of business, the same as insurance and banking and railroading; that it can be put in charge of competent men or those who are incompetent, in charge of honest men or knaves, in charge of those who will be loyal to their interests, who will save money wherever it can be saved, so as to lighten

the burthens of taxation, or who will spend with a lavish hand, with a perfect knowledge that their extravagance and waste will cost them nothing. If we are to be well governed we must select for our agents and hired men some of the best people we have—pick them out ourselves, and not allow them to designate themselves. We must find out what we want this and that agent to do, and select with reference to the question of fitness. Inasmuch as government is, to a large extent, a matter of business, men of business habits, business experience, with level heads and an abundance of good practical sense, are the ones who should be made our agents. A dozen lawyers in our legislature, three in the senate and nine in the house are as many as should ever be chosen. They should be first-class—none of your small fry, who can make windy speeches, but have no more idea of practical legislation than so many geese. Fill your legislatures and congresses with good business men, men of practical talents and familiar with the wants of the people, and the public business would be transacted in half the time now consumed, and in a much better manner than at present. The people should look these things squarely in the face. They should know what there is of this thing so much talked about and so imperfectly understood, yclept “government” and “the government,” and act accordingly. There is no mystery about it. It is simple enough when analyzed. It is nowhere near as complicated as a steam engine, which almost any good mechanic can comprehend. It is so simple that any man qualified to vote can understand it if he will give it his attention. And I insist that every voter should understand it—understand it for his own benefit, for his own safety. He wants to do it so that he may govern himself, so that our government may be what it purports to be, “a government of the people, for the people, by the people.”

## CHAPTER LXX.

Some of the Old Time Journalists—How They Differed from Those of Today.

When I came into this state the latter part of the summer of 1833, the newspaper press wielded great power. It differed widely from the influence it now exerts, but was not less potent. The editor fifty years ago was an important character, especially if at the head of a political journal. His paper was the organ of the party to which he belonged. He used all his talents to build up and strengthen his party, and to weaken and undermine the one to which he was opposed. His party and the measures it advocated were wholly right, those of his opponent wholly wrong. The politicians were as intolerant and bigoted as were the members of different religious denominations. The idea that a man could be honest if his political opinions did not square with those of his opponent was not to be entertained.

At the time of which I am writing, General Jackson was president of the United States, and William L. Marcy governor of New York. Their supporters were generally styled Jackson men, and those upon the other side were labelled "anti-Jackson," the latter term embracing the anti-Masons, then a formidable power in the western part of this state, and all others opposed to the policy of the occupant of the white-house. The whig party came into existence later, when its opponents were called "loco focos" and various other derisive names by the leaders of that organization.

There were few daily papers in the country as long ago as 1833. The Washington Globe, the organ of General



Jackson, edited by Francis P. Blair, was issued daily ; likewise the National Intelligencer, conducted by Gales & Seaton, which voiced the sentiments of Clay and Webster and other opponents of President Jackson. Duff Green also published a paper at the seat of government. I think it was called the Telegraph, and was the organ of Mr. Calhoun and others who sympathized with him. The Richmond Enquirer, published at the capital of Virginia, was a very strong paper, edited by that old democratic war-horse, Thomas Ritchie. It was the organ of the Virginia democracy, which was thought to be of a purer type than that of most other states. The paper was issued semi-weekly. There were journals of considerable importance at Charleston, S. C., bearing the names of the Mercury and Courier, and I think were issued daily. I have the impression that the New Orleans Picayune was published as early as 1833, for I recollect sparkling, humorous quotations from it at a very early period. There were journals at Nashville, Tennessee, and at Memphis, also at St. Louis, at the date last mentioned, but I do not recall their names. The Louisville Journal, edited by the caustic and witty paragraphist, poet and writer of remarkably fine literary articles, George D. Prentice, was established in 1830.

In New England there were a good many well-conducted papers in existence when I left that section and took up my residence in the Empire state. There were able journals in Boston when I commenced the business of reading the "exchanges," among which I remember the "Courier," conducted by J. T. Buckingham, the "Advertiser," under the charge of Nathan Hale, the father of Edward Everett Hale ; the "Atlas," published by Richard Schouler and others ; the "Statesman," Jacksonian, conducted by Beals & Greene, the latter a good deal of a wit, and always a pleasant writer ; the "Transcript," edited by L. M. Walter, and later by



Eppes Sargeant, one of the cleanest little sheets ever published, and which is still doing excellent work at "the Hub." There was at one time a gentleman named Sleeper, at the head of the "Mercantile Journal," who won distinction and wielded great influence in New England for several years. Outside of Boston there were the Worcester Spy, by John Milton Earle, the Springfield Republican, by Samuel Bowles, grandfather of its present manager, the Hampshire Gazette, the Greenfield Gazette, the New Bedford Mercury, and the Pittsfield Sun. Most of these papers still live and prosper.

In Maine, the Portland Daily Advertiser was often quoted from. The letters of Major Jack Downing, who was nearly as famous in his day as Petroleum V. Nasby was in his, appeared there originally, and were universally republished in all the anti-Jackson papers. I believe they were written by one Seba Smith. Then there was the New Hampshire Patriot, edited by Isaac Hill, who represented his state in the United States senate one or more terms, and was one of President Jackson's most trusted friends, and the New Hampshire Sentinel, published at Keene by John Prentiss, one of the staunchest federal papers in the country. It was started in March, 1799, and still lives. It was issued as a weekly nearly ninety years, and in 1890 it started as a daily.

There were papers published at Brattleboro, Middlebury, Montpelier, and other towns in Vermont; also in Hartford, New Haven, and other places in Connecticut, likewise in Rhode Island, but I need not give their names. The first daily paper in Connecticut was started at New Haven in 1833. Pennsylvania could boast of a goodly number of respectable journals, the publication of which was commenced early in the present century, some of them at even an earlier date. The Philadelphia

Daily Advertiser was started in 1785, the Philadelphia National Gazette in 1791, but how long they lasted, I can not say. When I first became acquainted with the Philadelphia papers, there were Poulson's Daily Advertiser, conducted by Zachariah Poulson, Walsh's National Gazette and the Philadelphia Inquirer, democratic, reflecting the views of General Jackson, as did the Gazette and Advertiser those of the opposition. The Baltimore American is an old institution. It has been a power in its state (Maryland) three-quarters of a century or more.

In New York city a paper called the "Minerva" was started in 1793, and was edited by Noah Webster, author of the original Webster's Dictionary, and the old Webster Spelling Book. It ultimately blossomed into the Commercial Advertiser, which is still in existence. The writer has in his possession a well-preserved copy of the first number issued, which is dated October 2, 1797. The New York Evening Post was started in 1801 by one Coleman, and was an advocate of the views of the federalists. Alexander Hamilton was a leading correspondent. The Citizen, edited by a man of the name of Cheatham, was the republican or democratic organ. Those who have read the explanation, in the preceeding articles, of the politics of those days, and by what names the parties were known, have seen that "republican" and "democratic" were then the names given to one and the same party. Mr. Duane, father of William J. Duane, who was removed from the office of secretary of the treasury by General Jackson, for refusing to change the deposits from the United States bank to the state banks, likewise edited a democratic paper in New York at an early day. He afterwards conducted the "Aurora" in Philadelphia.

When I came into this state, the New York Evening Post had become a republican or democratic paper,

and vigorously supported the administration of General Jackson. It was published by W. C. Bryant & Co.; William Leggett, subsequently of the "Plaindealer," was one of the editors. The "Standard," edited by John I. Mumford, was a sheet of great strength at this period. Major Mordecai M. Noah, who held several important political positions in New York, among others that of sheriff, was at one time editor of the New York Enquirer, afterwards one of the editors of the Courier and Enquirer, and later the conductor of the Evening Star, a wide-awake sheet in its day. He was always a democrat. The opposition papers were the Commercial Advertiser, conducted by Colonel W. L. Stone, the American, Charles King's paper, and the Courier and Enquirer, Colonel Webb's paper, which, in 1832, abandoned General Jackson and went over to his adversaries because of his devotion to the fortunes of the United States bank. Webb, Noah and Bennett were well-known editors for a considerable time prior to the establishment of the Herald by the latter in May, 1835. The Journal of Commerce, by Hale & Hallock, was a high-toned commercial paper sixty years ago, as it is today. The Sun was in existence, under the management of Moses Y. Beach, but being non-partisan, was not widely known. There were other papers in the city which will be recollected by old-time readers, among others the Gazette, by John Lang, and the Statesman, by N. H. Carter, but just when they were published I cannot say.

In the valley of the Hudson were the Newburg Telegraph, Poughkeepsie Telegraph, Catskill Recorder, Hudson Gazette, all democratic, the Albany Argus, likewise democratic, edited by Edwin Croswell, the Albany Advertiser and Gazette, semi-weekly, published by Hunter & Ryckman, J. B. Van Schaack editor, anti-Masonic, and the Albany Evening Journal, anti-Jackson, under the charge of Thurlow Weed. At Troy, the Budget was

the democratic organ. At Plattsburg, the Republican spoke for the democracy of northeastern New York, and if I mistake not the late Azariah C. Flagg was its editor. He was succeeded by Colonel Stone, for many years a well-known newspaper man in that section of the state.

Coming up the Mohawk there were the Schenectady Reflector, the Mohawk Courier, published by J. A. Noonan, who removed to Rochester and afterwards to Milwaukee. He was succeeded by H. N. Johnson, a very trenchant writer. At Utica, the Observer, conducted by A. G. Dauby, was doing valiant service in the cause of Jacksonian democracy. Of course, there was an opposition paper at Utica; perhaps it was the Gazette, but I do not remember who was at the head of it. South and southeast of Utica were journals at Norwich, the Jackson organ by John F. Hubbard, and the opposition paper by E. P. Pellett; and at Cooperstown, the old Freeman's Journal, conducted by Colonel John H. Prentiss, was a paper of great influence. The colonel was a staunch democrat, and served his district several terms in congress. On the other side was the Otsego Republican, in the office of which the late Colonel A. W. Clark, of Watertown, served his apprenticeship. There was a paper published at Cherry Valley, called the Gazette, which contained strong editorials, written, it was understood, by the late Levi Beardsley and the historian Hammond, who resided there. There were one or more papers at Delhi, Delaware county, of considerable pretensions. The Delaware Gazette was started in 1833, and conducted by A. M. Paine.

Going west from Utica there were the Standard and the Western State Journal, published at Syracuse—the latter by Vivus W. Smith, father of Carroll E. Smith, at present editor-in-chief of the Daily Journal. The Standard was conducted at a later day by his brother, A. L. Smith, for two or three years the editor of a demo-

cratic paper in Watertown. South of Syracuse there was the Cayuga Patriot, under the editorship of Ulysses F. Doubleday. He represented the Cayuga district in congress one or more terms. Like Colonel Prentiss, of Cooperstown, he was a practical printer. I called upon him one day after his retirement from public life, and found him in the composing-room of his paper, with his coat off and sleeves rolled up, engaged in making up the forms. The anti-Jackson paper in Auburn was under the management of H. Oliphant, uncle of Richard Oliphant, the proprietor of the large printing house in Oswego. At Ithaca there was the Ithaca Journal, published by Ebenezer Mack and others. Mr. Mack represented his district for a time in the state senate. The Geneva Gazette was published by John Greaves. The Courier was published in the same village, but I do not remember the name of its conductor. I remember this fact, that both the Gazette and Courier were handsomely printed, good paper being used upon forms which were tastefully made up. They were creditable specimens of the art of printing. I should say in passing that Geneva had an earlier start than any of the towns west of Utica. It was quite a place when all the settlements between that point and Buffalo were either unknown or small affairs. The Messenger at Canandaigua was a good deal of a paper as early as 1833, and received contributions from such pens as those of the late Judge Folger and the late Senator Lapham, I think. I do not at this moment recall the name of its ostensible editor. There were papers at Penn Yan, at Binghamton, at Elmira, (the Gazette at the place last named had the credit of being edited by Thomas Maxwell,) at Bath, where the Steuben Farmer's Advocate was ably conducted by Ben Smead; at Geneseo and Dansville, Livingston county, and at Batavia. Frederick Follett, at the place last named, conducted the "Spirit of the Times," a democratic sheet. He afterwards held the office of canal commissioner.



West of Syracuse, on the line of the canal, were the Lyons Argus, the Palmyra Sentinel, conducted by Pomerooy Tucker, father of Mrs. John M. Francis, and of Henry O. R. Tucker of the Troy Press, the Rochester Daily Advertiser, the Rochester Democrat, and several other journals whose names are not remembered. Buffalo contained at least two daily papers in 1833, and possibly three. I called at the office of the Republican, which was under the editorial charge of Horatio Gates. It was worked on a hand press, and I doubt if its circulation exceeded 700. At this day the establishment would be styled a one-horse concern. It became the property of Charles Faxton, who conducted it several years. One of the opposition papers, I think, was styled the Patriot; and I have the impression that the Commercial Advertiser, for many years ably edited by Dr. Thomas Foote, was the paper the present Commercial is lineally descended from. There was a noted firm of printers and publishers in Buffalo at the date of which I am writing, known as Day, Stagg & Cadwallader, whose imprint was often seen on work executed in that city. In Chautauqua county, the Fredonia Censor, published by Henry C. Frisbee, and the Jamestown Journal, by Adolphus Fletcher, were creditable journals when I came into this state.

North of the canal was the Oswego Palladium, founded by John H. Lord and Dorephas Abbey. (These gentlemen had previously come from Albany to Watertown, where they published a volume of *The Friend*, in 1815.) The Palladium was subsequently purchased by John Carpenter, who was its conductor in 1833. At this date the Watertown Register, by Benjamin Cory, represented the opponents of the national and state administrations, while the Democratic Standard, Judge Keyes' organ, published by W. Woodward, and the Watertown Eagle, conducted by John Calhoun, spoke for the democrats. Mr. Calhoun removed to Chicago in 1835, and



started the Democrat, the pioneer newspaper in that then not very promising village. The Jeffersonian, so long the mouthpiece of the democracy of Jefferson county, had not come into existence.

Mr. Cory came from Chenango county, where he began the publication of the Chenango Republican at Oxford in 1826. Alvin Hunt, so long at the head of the Jeffersonian in Watertown, also came from Chenango county.

In the county of St. Lawrence, the St. Lawrence Gazette, in charge of the late Preston King, was doing the work of the Jackson party in 1833. In that year it united with the St. Lawrence Republican, which was started at Potsdam, removed to Canton in 1827, and taken to Ogdensburg as above stated. It subsequently passed into the hands of Hitchcock, Tillotson & Stillwell, and is still published as the weekly of the Daily Journal. The Northern Light, at Ogdensburg, under the management of the late Judge A. B. James, I think, was striking vigorous blows for the opposition.

At Malone, in Franklin county, the Northern Spectator, under the guidance of John G. Clayton, George P. and F. P. Allen, publishers, was striving to gain a foothold in that then small settlement. The Spectator lasted until 1835, when the last named gentleman established the Palladium, which is still in existence. It was purchased by Messrs. J. J. and J. K. Seaver about 1854, who still have an interest in the same, and have made it one of the most thrifty, as it has always been one of the cleanest papers in northern New York.

North and west of Albany there were almost no papers published oftener than once a week, fifty-seven years ago. A daily had been established in Rochester as early as 1826, and between that date to 1833 two or more had been started at Buffalo, and there may have been a daily at Detroit, but with these exceptions there was not a single daily paper in any part of the west. Indeed, the west was unsettled and unknown, almost as much so as

is Alaska today. Even in Cincinnati a daily paper could not be made to live.

I do not pretend to have mentioned all the papers in the state, but only such as I remember, which were among the leading ones. I presume there were journals at Kingston, Johnstown and in Schoharie, but I do not remember hearing anything about them. If I have given the names of more democratic than opposition papers, it is because I was better acquainted with them.

I wish to say here that the newspaper of fifty and sixty years ago was not a newspaper at all. It contained little news of a general character, and almost no local intelligence. It was simply the organ of a party. In most cases it had been established by a few politicians, most of them ambitious to serve their country or to achieve distinction in some other way. The paper was to be used for personal and political ends.

To show how much value an old-time Watertown journal possessed as a local paper, I will give the contents of a copy of the Watertown Register dated January 4, 1832. The reading matter on the first page consists of a two-column account of a wreck on the Liverpool and Manchester railroad, also a sketch of Russian manners from the New York Mirror; report of the postmaster general, and views concerning the reduction of newspaper postage; report on condition of the army; an article on the Duke Constantine; chimneys on fire, in Paris; notice of a meeting at Union Square, Oswego county, which determined to petition the legislature for authority to construct a railroad from Pulaski to Salina; notice of the convening of the legislature; of the illness of William Wirt at Baltimore; of the address of the national republican convention; that application would be made to the legislature for the incorporation of the village of Utica; an article pitching into the Herkimer Free Press; extract of a letter to the Boston Liberator,

Garrison's paper ; congressional proceedings, very brief ; an article on the superiority of United States bank notes as a currency—they were preferred to gold ; notice of Mr. Van Buren at the court of St. James ; an article from the New York Evening Journal, stating that in case Jackson should be re-elected, and Mr. Van Buren chosen vice president, it was understood that the former would retire to the Hermitage, and the latter succeed him at once ; an article asking for Doct. Watkins' release from imprisonment ; notice of dissensions in the cabinet ; two or three miscellaneous items from papers outside the state ; a column of editorial "Observations on the New Year," and a poem addressed to Benjamin Cory by a subscriber. The only items of strictly local news are embodied in a paragraph from Brownville, wherein it is stated that the wife of John Hughes had given birth to three male children ; the marriage of Hon. Robert Lansing to Miss Maria Hubbard ; the death of William Lord at Brownville. There is a notice of Union academy at Belleville, which may have been paid for, as it ought to have been. The advertisements in the paper, by the way, possess greater interest to readers of the present generation than anything else, not excepting the "Watertown Price Current," which is subjoined :

Wheat \$1 ; rye 50c. ; corn 43c. ; oats 20 to 26c. ; hay \$6 to \$7 ; flax seed \$1 ; pork in hog \$3.25 to \$4 ; lard 7c. and 8c. ; butter 12½c. ; cheese 5 and 6c. ; tallow 8 and 10c.

The Register at this time was moderately anti-democratic. I believe it favored Mr. Clay for president in the campaign of 1832, who was the nominee of an organization styling itself the national republican party. William Wirt had the support of the anti-Masons. The whig party had not come into existence ; that is, it had not been named.

The copy of the Register before me was mild in its utterances for a political paper, but it was no doubt sav-

age enough after the tickets were in the field and the campaign had fairly opened. Newspaper readers of today know little of the bitterness which found its way into the columns of party papers half a century ago. Editors assailed their opponents as if they were villains of the most depraved stamp. They did not appear to consider that there could be such a thing as an honest difference of opinion. People who agreed on other subjects, if they happened to be apart in their political notions and preferences, became the most implacable opponents. "I do not say," remarked an old-time federalist in Connecticut, "that all democrats are horse thieves, but I do aver that all horse thieves are democrats." And we may be certain that the men thus characterized entertained the same feeling toward their opponents, and expressed themselves in similar terms. In the work of vituperation and abuse the party newspaper took the lead.

The journals of which I have spoken, outside of those published at the great political centers, were of little account in themselves. The Washington Globe and Albany Argus on one side, and the National Intelligencer and the Albany Evening Journal on the other, made known the sentiments of the two great organizations, and the press of the interior endorsed them as pure gospel, without the crossing of a t or dotting an i. It is indeed true that the editors of country journals did now and then give expression to their views, but they were careful to keep in accord with the great organs issued at the state and national capitals, which gathered up these utterances and re-published them as evidence that the position of the party magnates was sound and had the sanction of the people.

All this, the reader knows, is changed. The utterances of the Washington journals have ceased to be of the slightest importance. And the same may be said, to some extent, with respect to newspapers in New York and

Albany. They pass for what they are intrinsically worth, as do those emanating from the most obscure newspaper in the land. A newspaper organ is a thing of the past. It has had its day. A newspaper today is what the name imports. It gives the news, with such comments as its conductor may see fit to offer.

In another respect there has been a great change. The public journal is no longer *Prentice's* Louisville Journal, *Blair's* Washington Globe, *Bennett's* Herald, *Greeley's* Tribune, *Weed's* Evening Journal and *Croswell's* Argus. Today no one knows who writes the leaders and shapes the course of any newspaper. It is the paper which speaks, not some particular individual connected with it. The truth is, that in most daily papers there is half a score of writers and reporters, while the matter for the great city journals is prepared by a small army of this sort of people. Of course the management is responsible, but of whom it is composed few know or care. The only thing people concern themselves about is the paper itself. If that is wide-awake and newsy, they buy and read it. Its editorial utterances are of little account. An editor's opinions are entitled to no more weight than those of any well-informed individual who is familiar with the subjects discussed. Newspaper and other leaders wield far less influence than they did fifty years ago or twenty-five. The people are beginning to learn that the government belongs to them, and that it is their duty to take a hand in the carrying it on if it is to be the kind of one the fathers of the Republic undertook to establish. Of course there will be leaders, men with talents to plan and direct, but the masses must keep so well informed in the business of government that they can not be hoodwinked and used to carry out the purposes of those who may happen to be at the front, no matter whether they are there by their own invitation or by the consent of the governed.







# AUTOBIOGRAPHY.



## APOLOGETIC.

Following in the footsteps of the illustrious Benjamin Franklin, I have written an autobiography. George W. Childs, of the Philadelphia Ledger, I observe, has done the same thing. I have not seen this latter work, but if it is like the former, it is worth reading. This, I apprehend, is more than can be said of mine, which embodies some of the more notable events in the career of an ordinary country newspaper conductor. As to the "Fifty Years in Journalism," which constitutes the greater part of this volume, it is given to the public in response to the inquiry which has come to me from many quarters during the last three or four years: "Are you not going to give us your 'Rummagings' in book form? I trust so. They are replete with interesting facts, and you ought to put them in permanent shape."

As a literary work the volume is without merit. I never pretended to be a literary man. In writing for the press I have expressed my own convictions in the plainest and simplest words at my command. I have tried to make myself understood, and have generally succeeded.

The reader may very likely consider, as does the author, that the personal pronoun "I" occurs unpleasantly often in this publication, but how in the world is this to be avoided in a work relating chiefly to the doings of the writer?

B. BROCKWAY.

Watertown, July 1, 1891.



## AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

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### I.

#### RETROSPECTIVE.

I don't think I have a great deal of vanity. I am but too sensible of my deficiencies. I never had much chance to obtain an education. The limited one I have has been mainly picked up in a printing office. But one thing I learned early, to wit: that whatever task I attempted, to do well—as well as I knew how. I have been faithful to that maxim. Whatever work I have enlisted in I have performed according to the best of my ability. Whatever engagements I have made I have endeavored to keep, feeling that they were made to be kept. Probably I have made fewer promises than some people, but those I have made have been lived up to as far as possible ; and I hold that no man has a right to make a promise and break it. One should make almost any sacrifice to keep his word and to meet his obligations.

I started in the newspaper business fifty-six years ago. Leading democrats in Chautauqua county had made repeated efforts to establish a journal in their midst that would reflect their sentiments. A printing office was purchased, and its use tendered to any practical printer who would publish a democratic organ. The opportunity offered was embraced by several ambitious young men, who desired to see their names in print as newspaper publishers. One fellow ran the paper six months, and put out for parts unknown ; another a trifle longer, and then



left ; another, who afterwards became a leading editor and politician in Michigan, conducted the establishment two or three years and quit. Finally, the materials were purchased by a printer, who removed them to the county seat, issued two or three numbers of a sheet abounding in great promises, when he " followed in the footsteps " of his numerous predecessors, and fled the country.

The materials were subsequently sold for rent, the surrogate of the county and two other democratic politicians being the purchasers. They issued a prospectus for a weekly paper, to be called the " Mayville Sentinel," and invited me to become the printer. I made an arrangement with them, did most of the editorial work, as well as the printing, and at the end of two years purchased the concern, ran it eight years longer, and made it one of the leading papers in that county and in western New York. I did well in the paper, made money enough to purchase the Oswego Palladium and a good residence in Oswego, and should have had considerable left had I been able to collect what was due me. It will thus be seen that I embarked in an undertaking that appeared to be well-nigh hopeless. Everybody had failed that had had anything to do with it. I took hold of an enterprise that was away down, and when it was at its lowest point, and put life into it. I made money where others had failed to do it. I may add that the same " Mayville Sentinel " is still in existence. I suspect it has not grown much since I left it, but it still lives.

I don't think the Oswego Palladium snffered in my hands. It had twice as many subscribers when I left it as when I took hold of it. The daily issue I commenced, ran it one year, and finding that there was no money in it, that it absorbed the income of the weekly, and was a fearful tax on my physical energies, I let it go to some gentlemen who were ambitious to distinguish themselves in journalism, and who thought they could do better with

it than I could. It never paid anything until it fell into the hands of its present proprietors. The *Weekly Palladium* paid well enough while I owned it. I could have made the daily pay had I been willing to work twenty years for a bare livelihood.

When I came to Watertown in the spring of 1860, a weekly paper, the "Reformer," was published in the office from which the *Daily Times* is now issued. A year later my associates (L. Ingalls and I. M. Beebee) proposed to publish a daily paper. I did not second the suggestion, for it was as clear to me then as it was to all concerned afterwards, that there was no money in the enterprise, but any amount of up-hill work. However, the daily was started, and kept alive nine years. When Mr. Bigelow died, in the winter of 1870, the concern was in straitened circumstances. The paper was of little account, and its subscription list small. It was gasping for breath. Having been superseded as canal appraiser, I was out of a job, and proposed to Mr. Ingalls to take hold of the paper with Charles R. Skinner. Mr. S. and I purchased two-thirds of the establishment. We immediately improved the mechanical appearance of the paper, and gave it new life and increased vigor. It began to pick up from the day we went into it. The firm Ingalls, Brockway & Skinner kept together until December, 1873, when the first named found himself in a tight place in consequence of sundry judgments and executions against him. His interest in the paper was levied upon by the sheriff, and sold at public sale. I bought the interest. The concern then was badly involved. A few months later Mr. Skinner suggested that I should take his interest, which I did, repaying to him the money he had advanced, and assuming all his liabilities on account of his purchase. The establishment was then head over heels in debt. Up to this date there had never been anything like system in the business management

of the office. I determined to bring order out of chaos, and to see whether or not the paper could be made self-supporting. With this end in view, complete system was introduced in all the departments, so that it could be determined at any moment what each one was doing. My two sons were shortly afterwards associated with me, and have actively and efficiently co-operated in the execution of my purpose. The paper has been a success because its affairs have been carefully, methodically and economically conducted. I call it a success because it has paid its way and been all the while improving.

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## II.

### SOME ACCOUNT OF MYSELF AND IMMEDIATE ANCESTORS.

In at least one respect I am inclined to think I was an uncommon boy. I do not remember the time when I cared anything about what are called juvenile sports. I never saw the day when I would not as soon work as play. In truth, playing never had any attractions for me if there was work which ought to be done. So I never did much running or jumping when a lad. I have played base-ball, in the old-fashioned way, when a boy on my father's farm, but was an indifferent player, because I took no special interest in the game. I could wrestle and pitch quoits, but had no fondness for either. I have fished and hunted, but did it to oblige others who wanted I should go along. Of course, I did not bring home long strings of fish, and the squirrels, birds and other game never suffered seriously at my hands. I never could see any sport in traveling through woods and brambles all day, or in climbing over fences and rocks, and through morasses, and returning home at night jaded and fatigued, with a pigeon and possibly a squirrel or two to compensate me for my work. I never

was on a pair of skates in my life. My father was once asked, after I had arrived at mature age, what sort of a boy I was. His reply confirmed what I have been saying: "He never was a boy. Some useful employment always suited him just as well as play; I used to think even better." And this, according to my best recollection, was the precise truth. I do not mention these things in a boastful spirit. There are no two individuals precisely alike in their make up. All have different tastes and different impulses and different ambitions. There are those who are wholly averse to labor, who dislike physical exertion, while there are others who like both to work and play. I find no fault with things as they are. If the Great Creator had cared to have his offspring all alike, he would have made them so. I have no disposition to criticise His doings. I can only say that if everybody had been like me there would not have been much base-ball playing; the game in the forests or fields would not have been disturbed, nor the pretty fish in their natural element—not to any extent.

I was born in the town of Southampton, ten or twelve miles west of the Connecticut river, in the state of Massachusetts. I was the oldest of five children, two sons and three daughters. My father, whose name was Gideon, owned a farm, a very poor one, and I remained upon it until fifteen years old. I never liked the business of farming, and resolved early in life to follow some other pursuit for a livelihood. My father, though never poor, was never very well off. I think he was never worth to exceed \$3,000 or \$4,000, and probably there never was a time when his property would not have brought the former amount over and above his liabilities. He was a very independent man—in every sense; he made no promises that he was not prepared to keep, and had a way of thinking and acting peculiar to himself. He was a perfectly upright man. There are few men who will

not be crooked when caught in a tight place, who will not wriggle when it is seemingly to their advantage, but my father never would do it. He never knew how to dodge or twist, but met every responsibility before him manfully and squarely, turning neither to the right or left. He was a man of strong will; when he had made up his mind to a thing, there was no changing him. He was not an educated man, but he was a great reader, considering that he was a hard-working man. He read whatever book fell within his reach, whether historical, religious, biographical or political. He was pretty well informed. In his religious opinions, he was inclined to Universalism, though it is probable that any of the liberal sects represented his views about as well as the Universalists. He did not believe any portion of mankind destined to eternal damnation, and therefore was irreconcilably opposed to what is called orthodoxy. He had no faith in that class of people who hold that a portion of the human race are to be saved and another portion to be lost. He thought all men were to be saved ultimately. He was a democrat both in his religion and his politics. He believed in the equality of men, and opposed all projects and schemes for elevating one class and depressing another. He was radical in his views, though he voted the democratic ticket when the democratic party assumed to be the conservative party.

Like my father, I liked to read, perusing such works as came under my observation; but, to tell the truth, books were mighty scarce in the neighborhood in which I was brought up. There was nothing in the shape of a library in the school district; and had all the books therein, apart from those used in the school room, been collected, they would hardly have filled a good-sized market basket.

In 1832 my father sold his farm in Southampton, and, with his family, removed to Clymer, Chautauqua county,



in this state, where he purchased a farm, on which he lived to the end of his days.

My mother, whose maiden name was Nancy Williams, was a very excellent woman, and one whom everybody loved who knew her, for she was everybody's friend. I doubt if she ever harbored ill or unkind feeling toward any one. She "experienced religion" in early life, joined the Presbyterian church, but afterwards united with the Methodists, possibly because there was no Presbyterian church in the little village where she went to reside when she came into this state. She, however, cared nothing for creeds or sects. She could fellowship any person who endeavored to lead a Christian life. She was not a very well-read woman. She knew her Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and considered that knowledge all-important if not all-sufficient. She was, beyond question, a true Christian woman.

She belonged to a family of, I think, sixteen children. Her father, I imagine, was always poor; her mother was ill a portion of her life, and the children were obliged to care for themselves from the time they were able to earn anything.

Though poor, my parents both belonged to respectable families; that is to say, they belonged to families that were law-abiding and industrious. If any of the posterity of Isaiah Brockway or Daniel Williams, the names of my grandfathers, have tenanted a prison or an almshouse, the fact has never come to my knowledge. I have known a good many of the descendants, and they have been accounted good citizens.

Grandfather Brockway was a proud-spirited man, and considered it disreputable to be poor. Though he could never boast of being very well off himself, still he wished it to be understood that he was not at all dependent. Standing beside his pig-pen one day, watching his porkers eat, a neighbor approached him, and, looking into the pen, observed:



“ Ah, neighbor Brockway, you are going to have meat agin.”

“ Meat *again!* ” observed the old gentleman. “ *I’m* never out of meat.”

He would have thought the fact that his pork barrel was empty highly derogatory to his character as a man. What would he say were he to know that one of his grandchildren never owned a pork barrel at all, and never had pork enough to fill one in all his life? Probably he would consider that he had sadly degenerated. He died at Southampton, aged about seventy years.

Grandfather Williams was a steady, temperate, good-natured, hard-working man, and possessed many friends. His wife was Lucretia Willard, and she was born in Braintree, Mass. Both she and her husband lived to a good old age; the latter was something over ninety when he died.

I had one brother and three sisters; we were all born in Southampton. Nancy Kezia was born in 1820. When somewhat advanced in life she married Benjamin Greeley, a cousin of Horace Greeley. She died near Clymer in 1866. The other sisters died unmarried, at an early age.

My brother, Richard Baxter, was born in 1817, and lives at Clymer. He is a farmer, in moderate circumstances, is a good neighbor and a warm friend.

I was born April 12, 1815, and brought up on the old farm in Southampton. My brother and I both worked hard; that is, we were always kept busy, and took hold of whatever work happened to be necessary on the farm. We plowed, we hoed, built fences, drove the cows to pasture, milked them nights and mornings, cut and made hay, cleared forests and sowed the land to grain; in short, we helped about everything. We were about five miles from the village, hence we seldom went there excepting Sundays, when we were rigged up in our best

and started off "to meeting," either on foot or in the old wagon. The former was generally preferred in pleasant weather, for the reason that "our turn-out" was less stylish than that of our neighbors. We used to be dressed about as well as any of the boys, and tried to appear as well as any. For years I was a regular attendant at Sunday school in Southampton, and later in Northampton, when I was learning the art of printing.

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## III.

## GOING INTO A PRINTING OFFICE.

I had a desire to learn the printing business at a very early day. My father subscribed for the Westfield Register, published by Joseph Root, when it was originally started, and I always read it as soon as I could get hold of it, and very thoroughly, generally three or four times. When about twelve years old, I used to tell my father that I desired to learn the printing business, and he told me I might.

At length, in the summer of 1830, when fifteen years old, seeing an advertisement in the Westfield paper for an apprentice, I decided that my opportunity had come, and I prevailed on my father to get up his horse and wagon and take me to that village. Arriving there, I found the place had been filled, but I could not think of returning home that day. In the same paper I discovered another advertisement for an apprentice to a house-joiner. Father and I looked up the advertiser, ascertained the terms, and I went to work on trial. I labored faithfully about a week, officiating most of the time as a planing machine, on tough, well-seasoned yellow pine flooring. But I had by no means abandoned my plan of being a printer. Every night, after I was through work, I went over to the printing office to ascer-

tain how things were moving on there, and what the chances were of a vacancy. At the end of a week, it turned out as I had hoped; the boy who had got the place I wanted left, and I gave up carpentering, and went into the printing office. Here I remained about four weeks, and should have remained longer but for a difficulty I had with the publisher. Instead of employing "Pat" to do the wood-sawing, as printers did later, the aforesaid publisher required me to do it, not only for the office, but for the house likewise.

One morning I happened to remain a little too long at the house in this vocation. It was "press day," and I was wanted at the office. In no very amiable mood, the publisher notified me of the fact, and directed me to put down my saw and repair to the office forthwith. Not liking the style of his address, which was needlessly offensive, I told him to go to the — and I would go home. Finding he had waked up a considerable amount of grit—I was an exceedingly gritty boy—he tried to pacify me by soft words, but they were of no avail then. I left him, and shortly after went into the Northampton Courier office.

The Courier was started, I think, in the fall of 1829, by "Atwill, Mather and Turner." A greener boy than I was, I think, has not often entered a printing office; but I was ambitious, and was prepared to do whatever might reasonably be required of me. I was the first apprentice the publishers of the Courier had ever taken. It was late in November that I went to Northampton. I was pleased with my situation, and few boys ever applied themselves with greater diligence than I did during the first year of my apprenticeship.

When I had been in the office over a year Mr. Atwill purchased the interest of Mr. Turner, and became sole proprietor, as he had previously been the editor, and the question was canvassed with me whether the office

could be carried on without the help of a journeyman. I said the experiment could be tried, and it was tried. Though we did all sorts of work usually performed in a country printing office, I never heard that it was not satisfactorily performed. Apprentices were taken, and they were put under my tuition. I became foreman of the paper, in fact, though not in name, for I made up the paper, did the job work, read the proofs and attended to the business of the office in the absence of the editor. My wages were double those of the other apprentices. That I was a little vain, I have no disposition to deny.

Associated with me as apprentices were J. Henry Bardwell, L. L. Pratt and Willard McKinstry. The latter gentleman is a cousin of mine, and came into the office because I was there. He is the well-known editor of the Fredonia Censor, which paper he has published over forty years. Mr. Pratt came into this state in 1841, and two or three years later settled in Fredonia, was some years the principal editor of the Censor and later became the publisher of the Fredonia Advertiser, which paper he conducted several years. Since 1871 he has been on the staff of the Watertown Times. Both he and Mr. McKinstry are men of ability, and good newspaper men. Both have been postmasters of Fredonia several years, and enjoyed the confidence of their fellow citizens in a marked degree. It has always appeared to me that when the two and myself were associated together as apprentices, few offices ever had three better boys. Our employer did not half appreciate us. Though he may have considered us fair boys, he never became acquainted with us, nor we with him, until years after we left him, when we had all got ahead of him. When we were with him he seemed to think there was a "great gulf" between the employer and employe; hence, he held little intercourse with us, and we did not consider it

our business to make the first advance. He labored under a serious delusion. He should have made himself familiar with and found out what there was of us. He could thus have been of service to us, and we to him.

Somewhere about 1850, through my influence, Mr. Atwill obtained a position on the only daily paper then in Oswego, and remained there several years. While a resident of that city, he married an excellent woman, Miss Emily Pardee, sister of W. J. and Myron Pardee, by whom he had two children. She did not live many years. After her death he married the widow of Judge Barculo, who shortly after again became a widow, and is still living, I think, in Poughkeepsie.

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#### IV.

##### COMING TO NEW YORK.

Desiring to visit my father's family, which I had not seen in more than a year, they having removed to their new home in the extreme southwestern county of this state, I obtained leave of absence for that purpose, and one bright morning in the latter part of August, 1833, I took passage on an old-fashioned stage, drawn by four horses, for the capital of the Empire state. The stage started at 3 o'clock in the morning, and arrived at Albany just at dusk in the evening. The distance traveled was something over seventy-five miles, and as the road was exceedingly hilly, the ride was tiresome. I stopped at a hotel on South Market street, now South Broadway, opposite the steamboat landing.

The next morning, after breakfast, I made my way to the depot of the Schenectady railroad, which had been opened, I think, the previous year. It was near the head of State street, on the right-hand side, as you ascended the hill, a short distance below the state capitol. I do



not recollect whether I did or did not take any notice of that building. If I did, it is not likely I dreamed that I might one day occupy a legislative seat therein, or the position of private secretary of the chief magistrate of the commonwealth.

My chief concern was to secure passage over the railroad, which I may here say in passing was the only railroad in the state. The ticket obtained, I took my seat in the cars, and arrived in Schenectady in something like one hour. Whether the train was drawn by a locomotive or by horses I do not remember. I am quite confident I have passed over the road when the cars were drawn by horses.

From Schenectady to Buffalo I was to proceed by canal, then styled the "Grand Erie Canal." I took a "line boat," on which nearly everybody traveled in those days. You made, if in luck, about sixty miles in twenty-four hours; that is to say, you made the passage from Schenectady to Buffalo in about six days. It was not an unpleasant way of traveling. In fact, I enjoyed it. The entire country through which the canal passed was new to me, and I took in the whole of it.

Packet boats were run at this time, carrying only passengers, but only the well-to-do and those in a hurry patronized them. They made the distance in about three days and a half, and the fare was four cents a mile, while on the line boat it was only two cents, board included in either case. And there was this in favor of the latter, you stopped long enough at every little settlement to see the whole of it. We passed nearly all the principal points in the day time, and remained a sufficient length of time to do the village or town. I visited nearly all the printing offices on the route, and thus supplied myself and fellow passengers with the latest news and a goodly number of exchange papers.



Utica was then a small town, Syracuse a mere village, Rochester an active, promising place, and Buffalo a smart city of about 10,000 or 12,000 inhabitants, I should say. I recollect visiting several of the Buffalo printing offices, and remember that good printing was done there at that early day. I was in Buffalo a whole day, and at night took passage in a steamboat for Dunkirk. I passed a very miserable night, either because steamboat riding was a new business to me, for this was my first steamboat ride, or because I expected to be blown up, or encounter some other terrible disaster. I was very seasick, though I do not recollect that the lake was unusually rough. I was pleased when we arrived in sight of Dunkirk light, and jolly when my feet touched the wharf, though, to tell the truth, that seemed to rock about as badly as the boat had done. I found great difficulty in walking, even after I had reached terra firma.

The next day I went to Ashville, a small village on Chautauqua Lake, ten or twelve miles below the grounds now occupied by the Chautauqua Assembly. I remained there a short time, and then proceeded on foot to the place of my destination, the village of Clymer, where my father resided. The distance was seventeen miles, but that was nothing in those days. When I came out I expected to return to Massachusetts at the end of a few weeks, for I had not yet finished my apprenticeship ; but on writing to my employer for funds for the return trip, he found himself "short"—by no means an unusual circumstance in his case—and consented to my remaining in this state.

So I assisted my father on the farm, made flying trips to Pennsylvania, sought employment at the case in Jamestown, but did not secure it, and during the winter taught a district school in Clymer, for which I was about as well qualified as the average citizen is to edit a news-

paper. However, I made out to stand the occupation three months, which were the longest ones I remember to have passed in my whole life. But the experience was profitable, and I learned more of school books and their utility than I had previously known.

In March I wrote to the publisher of the Fredonia Censor, inquiring if I could have a situation there. He wrote me that I could, and I commenced work about the first of April. Three or four weeks afterwards the publisher of the paper, Mr. Frisbee, went to New York to purchase books, for he was a bookseller as well as newspaper publisher, and though he did not leave the paper especially in my charge, I looked after its management, and did it so well that on his return he seriously proposed to lease the office to me, urging that I would have no difficulty in carrying it on. But lacking both experience and capital, I declined the offer and continued to work as a journeyman until September, when I went to Dunkirk, where a new paper had just been started and better wages were offered. I remained there until the week before the fall election. About this time it occurred to me, as it has to many other country greenhorns, that it would be a smart thing to go to New York and "grow up" with the great men of the metropolis. Greeley was there, also Jonas and Ebenezer Winchester, both Chautauqua boys, and were understood to be doing well. What was there to hinder me from doing likewise?

I laid down my "stick," embarked on a steamer for Buffalo, went down the canal the same way I had come up the year before, and took a steamboat from Albany to New York. On my way I called at the office of the Albany Argus, and had the satisfaction of seeing a cylinder press in operation. It was the first I had ever set eyes on, and I was greatly interested. It was probably the only press of the kind in the state outside the city

of New York. It was propelled by a stout Irishman, and I judge was capable of printing 600 impressions per hour.

I arrived in New York at an inopportune moment. From the offices of most of the political journals, campaign papers had been issued for a few weeks prior to the election, affording employment to scores of compositors, all of whom were dismissed at the close of the campaign. So when I reached the city and applied for work at the printing offices, I was met with a short and emphatic "No, have just discharged three compositors," or, "I have today engaged all I want." Having encountered this sort of language fifteen or twenty times, from as many offices, I became a good deal disheartened, and wished I had remained in western New York. I called on the Winchesters; they promised to see what they could do, but there was nothing assuring in their words.

Here I met for the first time Horace Greeley, not the great editor of the Tribune, for that paper was not born until several years after my first interview with its founder, but the little-known editor of the New Yorker, a weekly journal struggling to gain a foothold in the literary world. He was sitting at a small table at one side of the little composing room, writing furiously, of course, and had barely time to look up when I was introduced to him. He was not yet twenty-five years old, and the greenest specimen of an editor I had ever looked at. His hair was flaxen and long, he had handsome blue eyes and a complexion white and delicate as that of a woman. My interview with him was of the briefest character. He was busy, and I did not wish to bore him.

I spent a few days in the city, and they were about the most uncomfortable I remember to have passed anywhere. For the first and only time in my life a feeling

of loneliness, akin to homesickness, came over me. I felt that I was a stranger in a strange city. I wandered aimlessly about the town, without seeing any familiar face. Everybody appeared to be in a mighty hurry. The rush through Broadway was not as great as it is now ; but the crowd in Wall street was perfectly awful, particularly in the latter part of the day, and there was an expression of anxiety upon the countenances of the people I met that sent a chill to my heart. I did the lower part of the town, and that was a good share of the city at that time, very thoroughly. The foundation of the Astor House was substantially completed, but nothing had been done on the structure itself.

After the first day I did not try to secure "a situation ;" didn't want it ; had had enough of that pursuit. Doubtless I might have found employment had I possessed more patience and fortitude, but I had not the courage or disposition to ask it. I was heartsick, and felt that any spot was preferable to New York. In this frame of mind I determined to wend my way homeward. Settling my hotel bill, I made my way to the dock, where was a North River steamboat. She looked smilingly at me, and beckoned me to come on board. I complied with the invitation, engaged a passage, and the following morning found me in the Old Dutch city.

From there I returned to western New York by the route I had passed over a few days previously. I reached home the last of November, in no very pleasant frame of mind, for I had spent considerable money, and obtained no visible return. It has always galled me to pay out hard cash and get nothing in exchange. The thing is often done, however, by those a great deal wiser than I was.

## V.

## FIRST EXPERIENCES AS AN EDITOR.

I had heard that the people of Mayville were about to start a paper, and during the fall I had addressed a line to Judge Osborn, asking for a situation in the office. Hearing I was at my father's, in Clymer, he wrote me to come to Mayville at once. This I was anxious to do, and started for that village on foot, a distance of about twenty miles, reaching the place the evening of December 3, 1834. I had less than one dollar in my pocket, but that was of no consequence; I had money enough due me; in fact nearly all my summer earnings were still due.

I found that a man by the name of Timothy Kibbee had got the place for which I had applied, and was assisted by a man named W. S. Snow. One side of the paper had been printed, and Kibbee and Snow were engaged in setting up matter for the other. I arrived in the nick of time, and immediately went to work at the case, and so assisted in getting out the first number of the sheet. Snow did not remain in the office a great while, and Kibbee was of little account, for he knew almost nothing about the printing business, and appeared to have the idea that he had been engaged to "oversee" rather than to "bone in" at type-setting and press work.

This compelled me to take the laboring oar, and as I was a very good practical printer and used to hard work, it was soon apparent to the proprietors, I presume, that I was the kind of a chap they required, and that Mr. Kibbee was not. At all events, they gave me to understand that at an early day they should let Kibbee go, and that I would be given his place if I desired it. Accordingly, at the end of three or four months, Kibbee had notice to quit, and my name went into the paper in place of his.



In this connection I may mention a fact that probably attracted little attention at the time, but which was of some importance to me personally. The proprietors had inserted a paragraph in connection with the terms of the paper, guaranteeing its continuance one year, and agreeing to refund to subscribers all moneys paid by them in advance in case of failure thereof. I told these gentlemen that if my name went into the paper it would continue one year if I should live as long, and that my compensation might be used to make good their engagement. So the guarantee was taken out when my name was inserted. Well, the paper lived the year out, and another year likewise, at the end of which the proprietors, Smith, Osborne & Whallon, proposed to sell to me. I accepted their proposition, bought the concern, and ran it ten years.

Smith and Osborne were lawyers; Whallon was a merchant; that is, he soon engaged in the mercantile business, and continued therein until he went into politics. I believe he died while canal commissioner or soon after the expiration of his term as such. Smith was a gentleman of the old school, an exemplary citizen, and one of the pillars of the Episcopal church.

Judge Osborn, likewise a churchman, was a very good lawyer, and personally a man whom everybody liked. Whallon was a Methodist, a shrewd business man, and one who always looked out for himself.

Judge Osborne was one of the easiest writers I ever knew, and I have known a good many in my day. He wrote without the least effort or hesitation, very rarely erased or interlined a word, and his manuscript was ready for the compositor when it was finished, spelling and punctuation included. He wrote good English, was plausible rather than profound, and carried the great majority of his readers with him. A trouble with him was, that he wrote equally well on either side of a ques-



tion. He had his faults, as have most people, but I can not help feeling under great obligations to him. When he prepared the "leaders" for the Sentinel, I was in the habit of trying my hand at short articles, nearly or quite every week, and these, so far as I remember, always received his commendation. This encouraged me to continue my efforts at newspaper writing; and it was not long before I found my articles were being taken for his, and this I considered a high compliment. One week, in the absence of the judge, I wrote the leader, and I was not a little surprised to find it copied in some of the Sentinel's best exchanges, with extremely flattering endorsements. Had the judge thrown cold water upon the productions of my youthful pen, had he exposed my faults instead of ignoring them, sneered in the room of praising, I have sometimes wondered what the effect would have been. I might have stopped writing altogether, or got mad and pitched in all the more vigorously, after the fashion of Byron when deservedly criticised by the "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers." As is known, all his productions were exceedingly tame and commonplace previous to this ungracious attack on his literary performances. However, the judge spoke only words of kindness and encouragement—it was not in his heart to speak otherwise—and, as a result, I have done considerable writing first and last. I repeat, I feel under peculiar obligations to him for his encouraging words.

The reader will remember—if he has not become weary in following me thus far—that I brought up in Mayville early in December. I was then nineteen years old. I stopped at the lower tavern; it was kept by Hezekiah Tinkcom.

In 1835 town meeting took place in March, and as I was coming out from breakfast, Tinkcom, the landlord, accosted me with the inquiry, "I suppose you will be on hand to vote?" I replied that I should be happy to

vote but for the fact that I was not old enough. I lacked a month of being twenty years old. "The d——!" replied Tinkcom. "I supposed you were twenty-five at least, and that is the common impression. You can vote well enough. Come up early, and no questions will be asked regarding your age." At that early day electors were not urged to "vote early and often;" it was enough that they voted once. Of course, it was important that they should discharge the duty early—in life. I was a new man in the state, comparatively speaking, and not very thoroughly versed in the qualifications of voters, so I acted upon the suggestion, came up early, offered my vote, and it was deposited in the ballot-box by the inspectors without hesitation. At this time my name was printed as publisher of the Sentinel, and it may have been thought I ought to have been of age if I was not. This much was true undoubtedly. I was better posted in state and political affairs at that age than are the majority of voters at any age. But I have never advised any one else to follow my example.

After purchasing the paper I found myself in something of a predicament. Hitherto I had never thought of being an editor—that is, the writing editor—my great ambition had been to be a good mechanic, a perfect printer, but now I *must* write for a paper, or hire an editor, and that I could not afford to do, of course; so there seemed to be but one alternative—I must do my own writing, and at it I went. This was a different thing from writing under the *nom de plume* of some one else. I had written considerable matter which appeared as editorial during my second year in Mayville, but no one except the editor knew it was not his, therefore the cheat was not discovered. My articles passed muster as well as anybody's so long as it was supposed that they were written by the editor. But now the thing was different; Judge Osborn was no longer the editor of the

paper; one Brockway had taken his place. The judge was known to be one of the best writers in the state; Brockway was wholly unknown as a writer; of course his articles would attract notice and be sharply criticised. It was with feelings of extreme diffidence that I wrote anything for publication editorially. I was painfully conscious of my want of education and inexperience as a writer. Therefore I wrote no more than I was obliged to. To my surprise my readers seemed very well satisfied. They did not complain at all; at least, not to me. If they discovered that I did not write good English, they had the kindness to keep the matter to themselves. Probably they did not wish to hurt my feelings by telling me what a booby and blunderer I was. But whatever the truth may have been, I entertain for them sentiments of the most profound respect. They were as lenient in their judgment as I was inexperienced and foolish. Had the fact been otherwise, had they judged harshly, had they exposed my weakness, had they ridiculed my productions, had they viewed them in the same light I did, it is probable the world would not have been greatly enlightened or annoyed by my articles. I was a sensitive creature when I was twenty-one years old, and a savage criticism would either have squelched me utterly, or made me angry, in which latter case I may have caused my assailant to think he had better have busied himself in breaking up hornets' nests and let me alone.

In a short time I began to improve the paper, typographically and otherwise; in fact, my ambition was to make it the best paper in the county, and unless the mass of the people misjudged and misrepresented, I fairly succeeded; for everybody, friends and foes, said "the Mayville Sentinel is the livest and best paper hereabout," and when I left it I think it had a larger subscription than any other paper in the county.

Nearly or quite a quarter of my patrons were political opponents, who used to say to me : "Brockway, we don't like your politics, but you are honest in your convictions ; you are frank and manly in their utterance ; we know exactly where to find you ; and, aside from politics, you make an attractive and readable paper ; therefore we patronize you." Hundreds of whigs used substantially these words to me in subscribing or paying up for my paper. My business was a complete success. I paid for my office, bought me a house and lot and paid for that, owned a horse and carriage ; indeed, I had everything about me as comfortable as need be.

I remained in Mayville until 1845, upwards of ten years. I saved in that time about \$5,000. On paper I was worth double that sum and more too, and everybody called me rich ; and yet \$5,000 is about what I saved in ten years. The latch-string of my house was always out, and no friend ever came to the county seat that was not invited to stop with me ; yet I never wasted anything. Both Mrs. B. and myself were economical, but were never stingy. We had everything that we could reasonably desire.

As I had done what no other individual had ever been able to do, to wit : keep up and render prosperous a democratic newspaper in the county, and in a village which could boast of a population of only about 500, where there was little mercantile advertising and only a limited amount of job work, it is not singular that I was looked upon as something of a prodigy and clothed with extraordinary qualities to which I had no claim. It is not remarkable that I was called smart and able.

People are quite free to shower compliments on those who are successful, and quite as free to disparage those who happen to be unsuccessful, though the latter may be more deserving than the former. The world applauds success ; but woe to the poor devil who fails. He is

nobody, though he may have more talents and more virtue than a score of those who succeed.

In the spring of 1844 I sold the *Sentinel* to John F. Phelps. I edited the paper until the close of the campaign of 1844, and then began to look about for a new opening. During the winter of 1845 I spent some time looking round. I was desirous of removing to some large, thrifty village in a county in which the democrats were in the ascendant. I had taken an active part in the management of political matters in Chautauqua county—being almost always a member of the county committee, and sometimes its chairman—and I was a little curious to see how I should feel to be engaged in a contest in which my party might expect to now and then elect its nominee. I did not wish to go beyond my means, but desired to make the best investment I could with the means I had. With more money I should have turned my attention to some one of the growing cities in the state, but I had no disposition to go into debt to any extent. Hence my mind went out to the villages. I thought of Coopers-town, Ithaca, Watertown, Ogdensburg and other places. Finally, being in Albany, I ran against two Oswego gentlemen, who spoke in such glowing terms of the town and its prospects that I told them I would call on my way home, which I did. Though not particularly taken with the place, I thought I discovered therein the elements of a considerable town. I had a conversation with the proprietor of the *Oswego Palladium*, whose paper I had understood was in market, and the result was a bargain.

In May, 1837, I was married with Elizabeth Allen Warner, daughter of Solomon Warner, and niece of Rev. Aaron Warner, for many years a professor in Amherst college. She was born at Northampton, Mass., and was a woman of rare excellence. She knew how to make a happy home. When she departed this life, Sept. 10, 1854, many tributes to her character and worth were



paid her by those who had enjoyed her acquaintance. Among them is this one, written by Mr. John C. Kinney, who was an employe and four years a member of our household while we resided in Oswego. He says :

“Death has stricken down one of the best women that ever blessed earth. I say this without adulation or exaggeration; for Mrs. B. was to me a mother—kind and watchful, and the remembrance of her goodness has been a ray of sunshine through the dark storm-clouds of my career, and her kind and disinterested advice has on more than one occasion shaped my conduct. I owed her a debt of gratitude which I have not been able to repay. But I know she has her reward in *Heaven*, for hers was a life of goodness, and she lived only to render others happy. Her deeds of goodness are graven on the tablet of Immortality by the hand of Omnipotence; and when the Apocalyptic Angel shall proclaim that “Time shall be no more,” her spirit, floating through realms of bliss, will have received but the tithe of that remuneration which the good of earth inherit—Eternal Life and Happiness. No monument of marble or brass needs be erected to her memory, for she lives and will live in the hearts of all who knew her, for they knew her only to love her. I have said this much because I could not help it; for her kindness to me during the four years I was at your house, had forged a golden link of friendship which neither time nor distance could sever.”

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## VI.

### IN OSWEGO.

About the first of June, 1845, I came to Oswego with my family, concluded the bargain with the proprietor of the *Palladium* and took possession. Up to this time nothing had been said by Mr. Carpenter, of whom I purchased the *Palladium*, respecting the editorship of the paper. It was hoped and rather expected by that gentleman that I would allow Mr. George H. McWhorter, then collector of the port, to edit the same, as he had previously done. The fact came out thus :

After the transfer of the establishment, Mr. Carpenter said to me :

“Before I make a full and final surrender of the *Palladium*, I want to take you down to the custom-house and introduce you to Mr. McWhorter, the collector.”



I replied, "Very well;" and went with him to call upon Mr. McWhorter.

Arriving there and being introduced, Mr. Carpenter observed:

"I could not, Mr. McWhorter, part with the Palladium, which I have published the last fifteen years, without coming down to the office and thanking you for the very great assistance you have rendered me and the paper. You have taken a deep interest in it during the entire time—have written the leading articles for it, and I trust that nothing has been or will be done by which your relations to the paper will be changed."

Mr. McWhorter, arrayed in a pair of fine gold-bowed spectacles, and assuming a remarkably complacent look, "owned up" to the truth of these statements. He said he had taken a deep interest in the paper, that he had always written for it, that it had afforded him great pleasure to do so, and that he should be most happy to continue to serve the new proprietor as heretofore."

This sort of talk embarrassed me exceedingly. Ten years earlier I should have embraced the offer with thanks.

But during those ten years I had been managing a paper myself, and had acquired, judging from the expressions of contemporaries, some reputation both as a writer and editor. I was known throughout the western part of the state as a plain, blunt, fearless, uncompromising champion of truth and justice, or what had been deemed such; and the idea of coming to Oswego to to "play second fiddle" to George H. McWhorter or any one else could not be entertained for an instant. I do not think I had the vanity to suppose that I could write better than Mr. McWhorter, or even as well; but I felt that neither he nor any other person would say just what I would say and in the *way* I would do it; and I therefore respectfully declined the generous offer the collector of the port had so graciously tendered.

I frankly told the two gentlemen that I had come to Oswego in the expectation of being the editor as well as the publisher of the Palladium, and thought I should be compelled to adhere to my original purpose ; that I was greatly obliged to Mr. McWhorter for his offer; that I appreciated the motives which prompted it, but that I should have to learn by experience in the new field that outside help was required before I should be willing to accept it.

Then my friends were embarrassed.

The paper, however, made out to live without the assistance of Mr. McWhorter.

Only one deplorable consequence followed the retirement of that gentleman, so far as I ever heard. For a year or more Mr. Carpenter was often heard to remark that he missed the polished pen of Mr. McWhorter from the columns of the paper. There were probably other readers in the same sad plight. I never tried to do much in the way of polish ; I never had any gift for dealing in unmeaning generalities ; but I gave Oswego a live paper ; it was addressed to live people ; and some idea of the estimation in which it was held may be gathered from the fact that I took the paper with less than seven hundred subscribers, (not half the number of the paper I had left,) and had the satisfaction of seeing the list doubled during the first year.

I remained in Oswego eight years. It picked up considerably in that time. It became a city in 1848. It doubled in population. It was connected with Syracuse by rail. The Daily Palladium was started. Yet I was not happy. I did not experience the satisfaction I had hoped to derive from conducting a journal in a county a majority of whose voters accorded with me in political sentiment. How it might have been at a different period—with the party united and harmonious—I do not know. Suffice to say, the political elements began to get into

commotion about the time I went to Oswego, and they did not quiet down, except at brief intervals, during my stay there.

James K. Polk was president, and Silas Wright was governor, when I took charge of the Palladium. The latter was styled a radical by those claiming to be his particular friends, and strong efforts were made by certain individuals in Oswego county to induce me to join them and make war upon another set of men who were adjudged to be less friendly to Mr. Wright—these last were classed as conservatives, old hunkers, &c.—the motive apparently being to get up a division in the party with regard to men when there was no disagreement in principle. Though a very decided radical in my democracy, I declined to go with the men who had so much to say about *their* radicalism, and endeavored to so steer my craft as to keep clear of the charge of siding with either of the contending factions. I discussed principles exclusively and had little to say about men. My course did not give satisfaction to either the conservatives or radicals; but that fact did not distress me; I was more intent on performing what I deemed my duty to the whole party than on pleasing any clique.

Everything went on pretty smoothly for a year or more. Silas Wright was a candidate for renomination; the state convention was for him almost to a man; no one imagined that there was or could be any valid objection brought against him; no one dreamed that he could be defeated when fairly nominated; but the so-called conservatives, headed (it was stated) by the editor of the Albany Argus, were dissatisfied, and entered into an arrangement with the whigs and effected his defeat. John Young was chosen governor. That I did not and could not sanction this act of treachery and perfidy, the reader need not be informed. Until this time I had treated all who professed to belong to the party as nearly alike as

possible ; but now I was not mealy-mouthed in speaking of the men who had struck down the St. Lawrence statesman. I characterized their conduct as it deserved. From this time onward, the democratic party in this state was in a broil ; I sided with the friends of Mr. Wright, and in the angry and bitter contest which followed in 1847, 1848, and so on, I was in the thickest of the fight.

The subject of constitutional reform was thoroughly discussed by the press in 1844-45. I wrote a series of articles myself, which were gathered up by some parties east and published in pamphlet form. The legislature of 1845 passed an act submitting to popular vote the question of "convention" or "no convention." The convention was ordered by a vote of 213,257 to 33,860.

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## VII.

### ON THE TRIBUNE.

When I took a desk in the editorial rooms of the New York Tribune, that journal stood in the front ranks, if not at the head of the newspapers on this continent. It probably wielded a greater influence than any other. It was in the zenith of its power ; it was stronger between the first of January, 1854 and 1860, than at any other period ; stronger than it has since been ; stronger than it is now. Mr. Greeley was then in the prime of life, and overwork did not tell upon him as it did afterward. He had discovered that some of the notions he entertained earlier in life were impracticable, and had wisely abandoned them. He no longer advocated Fourierism in the columns of the Tribune, and I think had lost faith in the utterances of Dr. Graham in favor of brown bread and an exclusively vegetable diet. He championed the cause of humanity, without regard to color

or sex, or condition in life, with an earnestness and enthusiasm that few can understand who did not feel as intensely as he felt. He was for freedom in its broadest sense, freedom from everything tending to fetter and debase. He considered it alike the right and duty of every human being so to live as to accomplish the high mission for which he was intended by his Creator. He had faith in the people, and so the people came to have faith in him and the paper through which he spoke. His utterances were thoughtfully read, and produced a profound impression.

Charles A. Dana, denominated the managing editor, was his right-hand man. Under the general direction of Mr. Greeley he dictated what articles should be published and what excluded during the time I refer to. He is now the editor-in-chief of the New York Sun; and the difference between the paper last named and the old Tribune shows the difference between Greeley and Dana. The latter is a good newspaper man. He knows how to make a popular newspaper and a live one. The Tribune was a live paper when he was upon it. He, however, occupied a subordinate position. Mr. Greeley was captain of the ship; Mr. Dana was mate, and obeyed orders. Acting for himself as he now does, the difference between the two men is palpable. Mr. Dana is a great man in his way. He was a great man on the Tribune. He is a man of wonderfully quick apprehension; his mind moves with the rapidity of lightning. He has great executive ability, can decide a question submitted to him quickly, can tell you what an article contains when he has glanced at the first page and perused six lines. He understood Mr. Greeley's peculiarities as thoroughly as did Mr. Greeley himself, and was generally prepared to second his wishes. I think he was educated at Harvard; he is certainly an excellent scholar; and came to the Tribune from the celebrated "Brook Farm;" a Fourierite establishment



having a brief career about fifteen miles southwest of Boston.

George Ripley, likewise from the "Brook Farm," was the literary editor, and probably did not have his equal in the country. He was originally a Unitarian clergyman, but preferring literature to theology, he obtained a chair in the Tribune editorial rooms, and filled it with very great ability.

George M. Snow was the "financial editor," and what he did not know of the operations of Wall street, and of financial affairs generally, was not worthy of notice. He was as much at home in his position as Mr. Ripley was in his.

The chief editorial writer, next to Mr. Greeley, was William H. Fry, one of the best informed as well as one of the most caustic writers upon the paper. He looked after the theatres, but could write upon any subject with consummate ability. He had a cordial hatred of pretence and shams. His articles were often taken for those of Mr. Greeley, for he wrote with all the earnestness and impetuosity of the editor-in-chief, and in much the same style.

Another gentleman who often wrote telling political leaders for the Tribune, was James S. Pike, of Maine, for many years the Tribune's special correspondent in Washington. He was one of Mr. Greeley's trusted friends. One day he was called to account by the managing editor for writing imperfect English. "Hang the grammar," replied Pike, "I write sense, and leave you and the others who can't do it to clothe commonplace ideas in grammatical form."

Bayard Taylor, when in the city, always took a hand in furnishing matter for the Tribune, and all who have heard him lecture or read his charming pen pictures, can very well understand the character of his productions. Taylor, like Pike, was a special favorite of Mr. Greeley.



Then there was Solon Robinson, whom some one likened to the prophet Isaiah, with his long white hair and beard and tall, gaunt form and garments to match, who was an admitted authority on all subjects pertaining to agriculture and agricultural productions, and who gave to the readers of the Tribune one of the completest market reports ever furnished the paper. He was a fluent writer, and was almost as much of a character as Mr. Greeley himself.

Next came Frank J. Otterson, a Jefferson county boy, who was at the head of the local department, and one of the swiftest and best writers I have ever met. He wrote with the same facility while surrounded by a crowd of noisy people as when entirely by himself, and so perfectly that he did not stop to correct his manuscript after it was written.

Then there was Don C. Henderson, the political editor, who kept track of political movements in all parts of the country. He had such a taste for politics as to render him almost oblivious to anything else. He could answer any inquiry touching politics at a moment's notice, and was really an important adjunct to the Tribune.

Besides these there were specialists who wrote articles on given topics. Henry C. Carey, for example, wrote many of the Tribune articles on the tariff. He wrote voluminously on the subject, and was an authority in his day, as Congressman Kelley was at a later one. And Carey was not the only one of a considerable number who did this kind of work. Count Gurowski, a distinguished Russian scholar, and thoroughly posted in European affairs, came to the office almost daily, and furnished in his own language articles which were translated in the Tribune office, and used to illumine the columns of that paper. Nor was this all. Articles forwarded to the paper as communications, if especially meritorious and timely, and treating upon subjects of

vital importance, and in a manner likely to attract attention, were often given an appropriate heading and used as editorial matter, the idea apparently being that the brains of the country were to be employed to make the Tribune the brainiest paper in America.

The editorial staff at the time of which I am writing embraced a dozen men such as I have described, and the reportorial corps was a small army. On the latter were some of the brightest intellects in the country. As already stated, the paper wielded a vast influence. Its daily issue was between 40,000 and 50,000 copies, and its weekly edition not far from 150,000. This circulation would not be accounted large today, but it was looked upon thirty years ago as something phenomenal. It was in some respects unparalleled. I believe I am justified in saying it was the leading newspaper in the land.

After the breaking out of the war, the Tribune vacillated. Mr. Greeley dreaded the effusion of blood, and favored a settlement of differences with the south by peaceable methods. Discovering that war was inevitable, the Tribune was for peace. It subsequently became impatient, and urged a more vigorous prosecution of the war. It criticised the policy of the government, and frantically demanded that the army should move "On to Richmond," but after the battle of Bull Run and the utter demoralization if not the rout of the Union forces, it admitted that its counsel had been unwise. It censured the administration of Mr. Lincoln, when it should have yielded that administration its warmest support in the terrible crisis through which it was passing. The paper about this time lost its hold upon the popular affections, lost the confidence of many of its patrons, which it never fully recovered.

I have not spoken of my own connection with the paper, and it is not important that I should. I performed the work assigned me, faithfully and to the best of my

ability. I looked after certain of the exchanges, compiled the general news and wrote such articles as I was directed to write. My duties were very general, more so than those of most of my associates, for several of them had special departments, while I, having been educated on a country newspaper, was expected to be qualified to wrestle with any subject, whether trifling or important, without notice or preparation. My position was in some respects a pleasant one, and had I gone to New York when younger, and upon the Tribune when it was started in 1841, I should have liked the situation. But I never felt at home in the metropolis, and losing my wife by death as I did in September, 1854, I was so overwhelmed and crushed by the terrible affliction as to be almost incapacitated for mental effort for several months; in fact, I never recovered from it while I remained in the city, and at the end of two years resigned my place and took up my residence in Pulaski, where I owned a dwelling, and where I could again have a home and look after the education of my children. I ought perhaps to state here that I was married a second time just previous to leaving the city, to a cousin of my first wife, Miss Sarah Warner Wright, who was born in the same year she was, and who has been a devoted companion and an affectionate mother to my children.\*

In Pulaski I was coaxed into the milling business, in which I sunk considerable money, of course. I say of

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\* My second wife exchanged the present life for the higher one May 26, 1891. Like the first, she was a noble woman, and lived only to benefit and bless those around her. The following tribute to her character was written me by one who knew her all through life, Hon. R. H. Porter, of Keene, N. H.:

"To the beautiful, loving tribute which was paid to the memory of Mrs. Brockway, by the writer who penned the article in your paper, giving a brief, though just, summary of her life, may I not add my testimony to her womanly devotion, her exalted Christian character, and the sweet, unaffected spirit of kindness and charity which pervaded her whole life.

"I knew her long before she became the companion of your later years, and I recall gratefully the kind, pleasant welcomes I always received when

course, because I have never been successful in any business outside of the making of newspapers.

In the famous Fremont campaign of 1856, I performed a large amount of political work, for I addressed great numbers of republican meetings in the eastern district of Oswego county, and I judged at the time with good effect, for the localities visited rolled up unprecedented republican majorities.

In 1858 I was asked if I would allow my name to be used for the legislature. Consenting, I was nominated and chosen by a large majority. All this time I did more or less writing for different newspapers. No week passed that I did not write something for the Pulaski paper, and not many days elapsed in which I did not furnish articles for some outside journal.

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## VIII.

### IN THE LEGISLATURE.

I went to Albany with the purpose of using whatever influence I might possess to reform our assessment laws, which all admitted were exceedingly defective. I gave notice of my intention at once, and applied myself to the work with great zeal. I actually drafted two bills, and was engaged upon a third when the proposition to appoint state assessors was introduced and carried

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visiting with my brother at her father's house, and the quiet, delightful evenings we spent there.

"I am glad that for you there can be only comforting thoughts in the memory of all the years your life was linked with hers, and this feeling is emphasized as I think of your devoted faithfulness and tender ministries to her during all the years when her health had become impaired, and she became less susceptible to social and intellectual pleasures than in the earlier years of your married life. The admiration I have always felt for your loving care of her has only been increased by knowing how great must have been the loss to you, by reason of that sad affliction.

"I have thought I must write you these few words, for I have wished you to know that I do not forget you."

through, but against my vote, for I was entirely satisfied that it would not remedy the evils under which we in this state were laboring. It was plain to my mind that there was but one mode of correcting our laws in regard to the assessment of property, to wit: Require every holder of property to make a full return of it under oath to the assessors. That plan, though not yet adopted, (in 1891,) I believe will be before the laws in question will be what they should be. Then there will be no need of state assessors, and boards of supervisors will be relieved of the trouble and vexation of equalizing assessments as between the valuations of different towns; for once let all the property in the state go upon the assessment roll, and there will be no equalizing to be done. Once obtain a list of all our assessible property, and let every article be put in at its real value, and the thing will equalize itself.

The speaker, D. C. Littlejohn, assigned me a place on the canal committee, probably because he supposed I could be of use to him there in carrying out his notions of canal policy; but I presume he soon discovered his mistake, for when it became apparent that he was in favor of continuing a policy which had been adopted in 1858, of allowing the canal commissioners to draw drafts upon the treasury when there were no funds therein to pay the drafts, I demurred. On this occasion I delivered the only speech of any length I made during the session, in which I took strong ground against this mode of doing business, while discussing at length what appeared to be the canal policy of Mr. Littlejohn and his particular friends. The speech attracted considerable attention at the time. I had it published in the Albany Journal, and the Argus and Statesman copied it in full, with flattering comments. Other papers in different parts of the state published it approvingly. The state engineer, Van R. Richmond, did me the honor to say that it wholly



changed the current of legislation, which up to this time had been in accordance with the wishes of the speaker, but subsequently he was able to make no kind of headway against the facts and arguments contained in my remarks.

Two or three propositions having been introduced looking to an amendment of the constitution, I moved their reference to a select committee. After a sharp contest between the lawyers and laymen of the house, the former insisting that these propositions should go to the judiciary committee, the latter prevailed, the committee was ordered, and I was placed at its head. This committee reported in favor of a resolution to submit to the people the question whether or not the colored men of the state should be allowed the elective franchise. The resolution was adopted by the assembly, only one republican voting against it, and subsequently by the senate, and the question was submitted to the people the following fall. Another resolution was adopted, touching the subject of judicial reform, but I do not remember its character and scope.

During the session I was placed on several committees. In fact, I had my hands full of work. I did not see an idle moment from the commencement to the end of the session.

Somewhat accidentally I became the parent of the registry law in operation in this state until the enactment of the Saxton bill. The republican state convention, in the fall of 1858, adopted a resolution in favor of a registry law, and thereby to some extent committed the party to such a measure. Accordingly, when the legislature convened, in the January following, Charles S. Spencer, a wordy and flippant lawyer and politician of New York, gave notice that he would introduce a bill to provide for a registration of voters. Shortly after, in fulfillment of this promise, he drew from his pocket a bill



that had probably been prepared before he left home, and laid it before the assembly. It was printed, considered in committee of the whole, and "perfected;" that is, it was gone through with section by section, and, I believe, put in readiness for a third reading. But few were satisfied with its provisions. There was too much machinery about it; too many officers were created; too much expense would be involved in executing its provisions. So little interest was taken in it that Spencer was afraid to let the house vote upon the question of its passage. In this emergency he caused a caucus of the republican members to be called, but only a few attended. Subsequently another was called. That, likewise, was thinly attended.

Meantime there were other gentlemen engaged in framing registry bills; and when they had completed their work they united with Spencer in asking the call of a third caucus. That was the first caucus I attended. Having arrived there, I found that six bills beside that of Colonel Spencer had been drafted. They were all read and freely talked about, as was Colonel Spencer's bill. After all present who were inclined to participate in the interchange of opinion had had their "say," I gave the meeting the benefit of my views. I told the gentlemen assembled that it appeared to me that we wanted something exceedingly simple and inexpensive; something that would barely answer the wants of the city, without damaging the party in the country, where, after all, the republicans would have to look for their majorities. I told the meeting that the rural towns did not require a registry law, that we knew every voter, and that few illegal votes were ever polled there; but for the sake of having an honest vote in the city we were willing that a registry law should be enacted. I concluded my remarks by moving that the matter of preparing a registry bill be committed to the seven gentlemen

who had favored the caucus with their plans, that they be instructed to consolidate them into one bill, and report the same to a future caucus. A gentleman moved that two outsiders be added, making the committee consist of nine members. Another gentleman offered a substitute for the preceding, to the effect that the committee consist of nine members, all outsiders, and be made up of senators and assemblymen. This substitute was adopted, and the caucus adjourned for one week.

Going down stairs, I was overtaken by the chairman of the caucus, Colonel Pond of Rochester, who placed his hand on my shoulder, and inquired :

“Brockway, you will go upon the committee ordered tonight, will you not?”

I replied, “No ; I have enough to do without bothering myself with registry laws.”

He continued: “You will if I put you on, I guess.”

Reflecting a moment, I said, “The committee is to be composed of nine members ; if it is deemed important I suppose I can stand one-ninth of the labor.”

The next day Mr. Pond came to my seat in the house with the committee made up, and he had designated me as chairman.

This took me by surprise, as I was not entitled to the chairmanship of the committee, for it was not my motion, but that of some other gentleman, which had been adopted.

However, I accepted, called my committee together that very night ; the outlines of a bill were agreed upon ; and Senator Noxon of Syracuse was directed to put them in form.

He went to his room, drew about half of the bill, was taken sick, and went to bed with his work unfinished. On the day but one before the caucus was to reconvene, I called at Mr. Noxon’s room, found the bill as above stated, and Mr. N. still in bed. I sat down in the room

with him and finished the draft. I took it to the meeting of the committee, which was held that evening, and the committee agreed upon it, and directed me to report it the next evening. It will be observed here that nine members of the legislature had agreed upon a plan of a registry law, and this was the first agreement there had been even between two gentlemen upon the subject.

The following evening I reported the bill to the caucus, reading it very carefully, for I intended that it should speak for itself. It was severely criticised, and especially by the gentlemen who had favored the previous caucus with their ideas of a proper registration act. Probably they were disappointed in finding that the committee had made so little use of their work. They declared the bill the committee had reported a thing of no possible use. It would, they contended, accomplish no good, and they insisted that it would not be acceptable to any portion of the state.

The caucus broke up without adjourning. Then the members of the committee whose work had been so unsparingly condemned assembled around the table of the secretary, on which the report was lying, and the inquiry was started, "What next? Shall the effort to give the people a registry law be abandoned, or shall another trial be made?" This question was debated some time; but it was finally decided that one more effort should be made before giving up the task as a hopeless one. Mr. Meeks of Queens county suggested that a meeting should be held at his rooms on Washington street the next evening; that the better portion of the legislature, the men who had no axes of their own to grind, be invited to it, with sundry gentlemen who were inclined to make war upon measures in whose preparation they had not been consulted. The suggestion met with favor, and accordingly some thirty gentlemen, senators and assemblymen, convened at Mr. Meeks' rooms in pursuance of

the arrangement. Among others present I recollect F. A. Conkling of New York, A. Hutchinson of Orleans, Mr. Farnum of Dutchess, Mr. Morris of Yates, and Mr. Pond of Rochester. The bill was taken up, modified in some particulars, and agreed upon. Then came up the question, "Can it be carried in the house?" I remember that I answered for about twenty-five members who occupied seats in the vicinity of my own. Other gentlemen answered for other portions of the assembly. The question was to come up the next morning in the house, so those who had been present at the meeting were industrious about the time that body was getting together. Every friend of the bill saw his friends and told them what was up, that an effort was to be made to substitute the bill that had been reported to the caucus for Spencer's bill. In due time that order of business was reached. Mr. Spencer moved that his bill be ordered to a third reading. I immediately rose, and obtaining recognition from the presiding officer, I informed the house that I desired to offer a substitute for Mr. Spencer's bill, which I would send to the clerk's desk. The bill was then sent up, and read by the clerk, when I moved it as a substitute. The question was first taken on Spencer's motion. It received 13 votes. I had 96 for mine. The bill was then ordered to be printed. When it came back from the printer, it was taken up and passed, and in the course of the session went through the senate without material amendment.

While the bill was under consideration in the latter body, another bill was substituted for it in committee, and I think this thing was done more than once, but the substitute could not be passed; and the senate finally fell back upon the assembly bill and passed it.

The law has been considerably modified and amended since that time, as I expected it would be. It was my idea to secure a plan of registration, one that no party or

class of men could reasonably find fault with, one that designing and unscrupulous partisans could not make odious and overthrow by their cavils, believing that when once established it could be amended as experience should show that it ought to be. I knew the prejudice against any kind of a registry law in the state, and knew that that prejudice was to be disarmed and overthrown, or it would overthrow the law, and possibly the party that had taken the responsibility of enacting it. The result has been as I anticipated. It is always better to take half a loaf when you cannot obtain a whole one, especially when the chance is fair that if you accept the former without grumbling, you will be tolerably sure of getting the latter in the end.

During this session of the legislature propositions were brought forward to impose canal tolls upon the railroads and to compel the roads to carry freight at a stipulated sum per mile, without reference to the distance it might be transported. It was plausibly urged that the roads were competing for a class of business which properly belonged to the canals, and that the state, as the owner of the canals, owed it to herself to take care of her own property, and save it from the war which, it was alleged, the railroads were waging against the same. It was stated that the roads ought to be tolled. It was also maintained that they should be compelled to carry freight at so much per mile, whether it was moved three miles or one hundred. At first I was inclined to regard these propositions with favor; but finding that they were advocated by parties engaged in using the canals as forwarders and boatmen, and finding that these were governed by selfish considerations entirely; that they cared nothing for the interest of the state, and as little for those of the canals; finding that there was in truth little competition between the canals and railroads; that the canals could carry freight *cheapest* and the railroads



*quickest*; that whosoever desired low freights and was in no haste would be sure to send by the canals, while parties in a hurry to get to and from market would just as certainly patronize the railroads, I was constrained to examine the subject carefully, and the result was, that I made up my mind to oppose the scheme of tolling the roads, as well as what was called the pro rata freight bill. I have never been able to satisfy myself that there was the least merit in either of the propositions.

Returning home in the spring, I put upon paper my views, and they were considered of such merit by a friend or two, to whom I read them, that they were forwarded to the editor of Hunt's Merchant's Magazine, where they were published, and attracted much attention at the time. The article was republished by the New York Herald, Albany Argus and Troy Times, the latter characterizing it as able and truthful. Of course, the canal men all denounced it in the bitterest terms; but as far as I know, no one ever attempted to answer it. The New York Times characterized it as an article in favor of the sale of the canals, and the Buffalo papers, I have understood, called me all sorts of hard names. But I have survived their abuse, and lived to see the time when the question is mooted by leading men all over the state, "whether it is not best to dispose of the canals," and may yet be decided in the affirmative.

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## IX.

## IN WATERTOWN.

In the winter of 1860, happening in Albany, I met John A. Haddock, who was then an assistant clerk in the lower house. Haddock inquired what I was doing. I told him not much, but that I had been looking around for an opportunity to purchase a newspaper.



"Go to Watertown," said he. "There is room enough in the Reformer for Ingalls, yourself and me. We would make a strong team and a great paper. I will write to Ingalls at once, and if he consents, as I have no doubt he will, we will sell you a third of the concern. There is no better location than Watertown, and no better newspaper establishment than the Reformer." I said: "You may write to Ingalls."

This he did, and receiving a favorable answer, I came to Watertown, looked over the books and business as well as I could, and decided to purchase a third interest, and about the middle of March commenced work, Ingalls and Haddock announcing in the columns of the paper my connection therewith.

Everything went on satisfactorily so far as I knew for five or six weeks, until Mr. Haddock had completed his labors at Albany, and I had made arrangements for changing my residence, and had actually gone to Pulaski to superintend the removal of my household effects, when I received a note from Mr. Ingalls, stating that "considerations had arisen in the minds of himself and Haddock which inclined them to believe that I had better suspend moving until I should see them again," and requesting me to come to Watertown at once.

This invitation was responded to without delay. I met Mr. Ingalls, who gave me to understand that Haddock was dissatisfied with what had been thus far done, and wished to back out, though everything up to this point had been instigated by him. Of course, I felt indignant, and that I had been shabbily treated, and I could not think of retiring from a position into which I had been drawn by men who had been considered honorable, and who should have known what they were doing.

After spending several hours with Mr. Ingalls, for Haddock at no time put in an appearance, he consented

that I might come on and take a position in the office at a salary of \$10 per week. As those were the best terms I could obtain, I was compelled to accept them, or repudiate a variety of engagements I had made looking to a "change of base," a thing I had never done, and could not then think of doing.

What the explanation was I never knew. I presume, however, that Haddock had got upon one of his "tantrums," when he assailed friend and foe alike, and insisted that the arrangement that had been made with me should be broken up. At all events, that was what was done, and possibly I should have been satisfied, since it is not at all likely that he and I would have lived together pleasantly.

In August he had a "flare-up" with Mr. Ingalls, when the twain dissolved partnership, and I was given Haddock's place in the concern.

The republican assembly district convention in the fall, without my knowledge, did me the honor of making me a delegate to the state convention, and I used such influence as I could command to nominate the late Dr. James K. Bates for the office of state prison inspector, which he desired. It is possible he would have been nominated in any event; I can only say he was nominated that very year, and elected, and held the position six years.

The Reformer was simply a republican paper, earnest and honest in the advocacy of republican measures. It did not favor the nomination of Governor Seward for president in 1860, mainly because of the influences back of him, and was delighted with the selection of Abraham Lincoln, and labored zealously for his election, as it did for the entire republican ticket.

Some time previous to the election Isaac M. Beebee was taken into the concern, and remained therein something over a year, when he enlisted in his country's service,

going to the war in the 94th regiment. It was while he was with us that the daily issue of the Reformer was commenced. Certain of the southern states had set up a government in opposition to that of the United States, and were evidently in earnest in the plan of forcing a separation. They had fired on the old flag. Of course, the times were interesting and exciting. Every one was eager for the news, and the latest. Daily papers were in great demand. The weekly was of no account ; it was too slow. So there was a rush for the daily issues, and as a consequence the weekly paper suffered. Probably a hundred subscribers quit the Reformer for the Watertown News or some other daily. This alarmed my associates, who insisted that the Reformer must get out a daily edition to save its business. I opposed the proposition, averring that no money could be made in the enterprise in a dozen years, and that the better plan was to build up a first-class weekly, such as the Reformer was becoming, and leave the business of starting and conducting daily newspapers in places of the size of Watertown to those who had money to fool away and who were prepared to do any amount of hard work for small compensation. However, the daily was started ; the proprietors performed a great deal of severe labor upon it, and at the end of fifteen years stood about where they were when the paper was commenced.

The circulation of the daily during the war was quite respectable, running up to 1,500 and to 2,000 copies some days ; but little attention was paid to the advertising, and so receipts were all swallowed up in the large expenses. The proprietor of the News was not long in discovering that he was not likely to achieve a fortune in its publication, and at the end of one year accepted a proposition from the Reformer people to take his paper off his hands. I do not remember the amount paid, but it was inconsiderable, though it embraced the

franchise of the Associated Press, as I have always understood, which was the only thing of any real value.

During the summer of 1864 the name of Reuben E. Fenton, who was then in congress, was spoken of in the press of the state in connection with the office of governor. Having known him quite well in Chautauqua county, and even better after he had been elected to a seat in the house of representatives, I warmly seconded the plan of nominating him for chief magistrate of the state. The Reformer contained several articles in advocacy of his merits, and individually I did what I was able at the state convention to secure his nomination. As is generally known, he was nominated and chosen. All this was a mere matter of friendship. I had known Mr. Fenton from boyhood, and had become interested in his personal advancement and political promotion. He had made an excellent record in congress, and I believed he would acquit himself with credit in the gubernatorial chair. History proves that I did not misjudge. His administration was one of the purest the state has ever had. He had too much pride to do a wrong or questionable thing. Personally a clean man, his private life and public acts were without soil or blemish.

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X.

AS PRIVATE SECRETARY.

After the election in November I received a telegram from Mr. Fenton, governor-elect, asking me to meet him in Jamestown at an early day.

A few days afterward I reported in Jamestown. Mr. Fenton said to me, that having been chosen governor, he was disposed to avail himself of my services in some way. He inquired what places would be vacant, and I answered him as well as I knew. He asked me what

place I would like. I told him there were but two offices at Albany that I could afford to take, to wit: the banking and the insurance departments. He told me he was going to Washington to remain three or four weeks, when he should return to Albany, and desired that I should meet him there to assist him in the preparation of his message. On his reaching Albany I joined him, and spent several days with him. About this time the papers had it that I was to be the governor's private secretary, though the governor had not intimated the thing to me, and probably to no one else. One evening, however, just before the first of January, as we were seated together in his room, he observed :

"Brockway, I guess I shall have to make you my secretary, temporarily at least. Your name seems to have got into the papers—how, I do not know, for I am sure I have not hinted to any one whom I should appoint ; in fact, I had not decided in my own mind whom I should designate ; but the sentiment of our friends seems to point to you as the man. All who have spoken to me on the subject say the selection would be an excellent one ; and though I know you do not want the position, I think you had better take it, and if I can fix something more to your liking later I will do it. In the meantime I will see that the pay is satisfactory, if I have to make it so out of my own pocket."

My reply was, "Very well," and on the first of January the keys of the executive chamber were handed over to me, and I discharged the duties of the office to the best of my ability.

Several journals spoke in flattering terms of Mr. Fenton's action. The New York Evening Post, after saying that the position of private secretary, "under the present organization of the executive department, is of great importance," spoke of the selection as a fortunate one. "Mr. Brockway's experience, personal character and



aptness for public business are too well known to require commendation." The Troy Times quoted the Post's article, and added: "Governor Fenton has made a capital appointment in the selection of Mr. Brockway. There is not a truer man living, and his talents qualify him for any position he may be called to fill." The Utica Herald contained this notice:

"It is stated that Governor Fenton has appointed Hon. Beman Brockway of Watertown his private secretary. It is a wise designation. Few men are more familiar than Mr. Brockway with the affairs of the state. He was a member of the assembly in 1859, from Oswego county, and he has for many years filled creditably the editorial chair. He is now connected with the Watertown Reformer. He is a man of sterling honesty, and of strong, practical sagacity, as well as a clear and able writer. He has every way higher qualifications than are possessed by those usually designated for such a position. We congratulate the governor-elect on his fortunate choice, and on his discretion in selecting an able and experienced man for a station so important as that of private secretary."

There is not much of the office of secretary, if the occupant of the executive chair is competent and inclined to prepare his own letters and papers. Governor Fenton had his own ideas, and no one could transfer them to paper as well as he could himself. He was deliberate and cautious in the expression of opinions, and took considerable time in the framing of even an ordinary epistle. He could rarely use any paper I had drafted without toning down and modifying the language and style. His manner of saying a thing and mine were widely different. I dashed off documents I was instructed to write as I would have prepared an editorial article, having a clear conception of what I desired to say, and saying it, while the governor would express the same sentiments in a more careful way. He was a gentleman in all his instincts, and was unwilling to offend if he could avoid it. We always agreed, for we aimed at the same ends, though our methods of reaching them were unlike. General Jackson needed a private secretary to soften down his crude and harsh expressions. Martin



Van Buren did not; no man could utter his sentiments as well as he could himself; and the same thing could be said of Governor Fenton. Had I been in his place I should have been glad of some one like the governor for my secretary. He would have been of more service to me than I think I was to him. So in the latter part of February the governor said to me, he thought he should have to name me as one of the canal appraisers. He said, as circumstances were, he did not see how he could avoid the renomination of Mr. Van Dyck as superintendent of the banking department, and Mr. Barnes as superintendent of insurance. "I will do the next best thing I can, designate you as one of the canal appraisers, an office of much importance, and though the pay is not equal to that of the bank and insurance superintendents, the duties will be lighter. Besides, I shall require your assistance more or less, and I will see that the compensation is satisfactory. I am going to nominate Judge Brooks of Elmira and yourself as two of the appraisers, and the public will then say the office has been committed to honest hands. You and the judge will not need watching."

Of course, I told the governor that I was in his hands, and he would make such disposition of me as he should see fit.

I was accordingly nominated and confirmed as one of the canal appraisers, and discharged the duties of the office probably as well as could be expected, considering that I had no knowledge of law, and had had no experience in any judicial position.

When Mr. Van Dyck was appointed assistant treasurer at New York the governor telegraphed me to come to Albany, and he tendered me the position, remarking, however, as he did so, that the office was becoming one of secondary importance; the state banks would soon become national ones, and it was impossible to say how

soon the office might be abolished. He went on to say : " You are just becoming familiar with the duties of the place you are in ; I hear good reports of your official doings, and it may be questionable whether it is advisable to give up the office, even to obtain one where the pay will be greater, since it is uncertain what disposition may be made of it by the next legislature. I shall not advise you to abandon a certainty to take up with an uncertainty. You cannot at any rate acquire any particular credit in the banking department, and it is doubtful if you ought to take it." The views presented by the governor appeared so sensible that I concluded to continue in the office of appraiser, and let the banking department go—to George W. Schuyler, who was appointed, I think, in the winter of 1866.

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## XI.

## AS CANAL APPRAISER.

As the board of canal appraisers has been abolished, or rather superseded by the court of claims, a brief description of the former may not be amiss. Few outside the sections traversed by the state canals ever knew anything of the powers and duties of this board.

The board of appraisers was neither more nor less than a court of claims. Like most of the courts of this state, when first organized, it embraced laymen as well as lawyers. The county courts, previous to the adoption of the constitution of 1846, were composed to a large extent of laymen. I know of counties in which there was not a single lawyer on the bench. The judges were selected from the most respectable portion of the people, of doctors and others, distinguished for their intelligence and regard for justice and fair dealing. Even the court of last resort in this state, answering to the present court

of appeals, was composed of the state senate, in which the lawyers were often in a decided minority. Yet it is not pretended that the decisions made by the old-time courts were not as sound and just as those made by our modern judicial machinery.

The board of canal appraisers, I think, usually contained one lawyer and two laymen. It was thus constituted when I became a member of it. It was the business of the board to adjust claims for damages sustained by individuals at the hands of the state and its agents. The canal break at Whitestown, in the spring of 1890, whereby damages to the extent of a couple of hundred thousand dollars, more or less, were sustained, would have been a case for the appraisers to look after and adjust. In fact, there was a great variety of those claims, but they all went to the appraisers, either under the general statutes or by special enactment. The state has been a trespasser upon the property of individuals ever since work was commenced on the Erie canal. It appropriated the property of thousands of individuals when it built the canals, and it has been doing it in the work of enlargement, in keeping the canals in repair, in the construction of reservoirs, in maintaining them ; in short, there is almost no end to canal claims, and they are mainly just, except it be considered that individuals have no rights that the state is bound to respect.

The appraisers were not merely judges, but witnesses as well, in the adjudication of claims, for they were required to visit premises alleged to be damaged, so that they acted upon their own judgment as well as upon that of the parties filing the claim and others familiar with the facts. It was an equity tribunal, unhampered by the technicalities of the law. Its prerogative was to see that neither the state nor the party making a claim was wronged. Of course it may have committed errors, for human judgment is fallible, but I do not see how a bet-

ter plan could be established for the administration of justice in cases of this sort.

I entered upon the discharge of the duties with an earnest purpose to close up and settle every just claim there might be against the state at the earliest practicable period. It appeared to me that if the state was owing fair claims it was its duty to pay them, and I so expressed myself to one of my associates who had held the position several years. "See here," said this gentleman, "the appraisers can make awards amounting to about \$200,000 a year, and if they go beyond that they are adjudged wasteful and extravagant; their conduct is criticised by people living off the lines of the canals; the legislature grudgingly votes money to pay the awards, and the press expresses doubts if they have rigidly performed their duty." I protested against this style of argument, but it was the policy acted upon by the majority, and the result was, the obligations of the state to individuals were not materially reduced during the five years I was in office. My impression is that they were not reduced at all.

The fact is, hungry claimants who had entrusted their business to active, energetic lawyers, who probably labored for a percentage, gave the appraisers no peace until they had heard their claims, while patient people who had no time to press their claims to a hearing were, as a rule, wholly neglected. Occasionally an old claim was heard, but a vast majority of the awards made were for damages that had been sustained within a short period. Old claims with no one to look after them were generally allowed to wait, and no doubt are still waiting. For this course there is no justification. If the state has injured any person to the extent of \$500, by flooding his meadows, destroying his crops, or in any other way, there is no reason why it should not pay the demand, and promptly.

The last year I was on the board (1869) the great flood on the Black river occurred. It was the most sudden and tremendous rise of water that had ever been known in the valley of this stream. Nearly every dam was swept away between Forestport and Dexter, and most of the tanneries, mills and factories were either utterly destroyed or so damaged as to be useless to their owners in the condition in which they were left. All the dams in Watertown went out, and of course our mills and factories were at a stand-still, and certain to remain so for a long time to come. The same thing was true to a greater or less extent the entire length of the river. The owners of property thereon were completely paralyzed. The flood occurred in April, and while there was yet considerable snow in the water-shed of the river; if the result of rain or the melting of the snow, all the sufferers could do was to pocket the loss and prepare to rebuild as soon as they could obtain the means. After a few days it was learned at Forestport that the dam at the North Lake reservoir, some twenty miles above that place, had gone out, and it occurred to some one that the giving away of this dam might have something to do with the great flood which had devastated the country below. The late Judge Doolittle went Albany in the interest of sufferers in Oneida county to ask for a special act of the legislature for the appointment of a commission to ascertain whether the failure of the dam had any connection with the flood, and thus determining the liability or non-liability of the state. While preparing his bill the question was asked, "Why not refer this matter to the board of appraisers?" Of course, he had no objection, and a bill was passed directing the appraisers to look into the case, and if they found the state liable, to award such damages as they should consider just. The claimants were given three months in which to file claims. At the expiration of this period two of the appraisers visited the North Lake



region, after which the examination of the question of liability was commenced, and continued with little intermission until the close of the year. A vast amount of testimony was taken, a good share of it irrelevant, but so much of it as was material was in before the 31st of December, and the appraisers complied with the letter of the law, which directed them to hear and decide the whole matter on or before the 31st of December. For this action there were two reasons ; first, the terms of the law itself, and second, the fact that the appraisers were then holding over, and were liable to be superseded any day after the first of January, in which case the labor of four months' investigation and a large amount of money would be lost.

Why I say most of the testimony taken was irrelevant is this : In settling the state's liability, but one question was to be considered : Did the going away of the dam produce the unprecedented flood ? That it caused the damage at Forestport and as far down the river as Lyons Falls, there was no question. Did it cause the great overflow between Lyons Falls and Carthage ? and did it influence the sudden and fearful increase in the volume of the stream below ?

The position of the state was this : That the waters from North Lake reservoir, situated some twenty miles above Forestport, were ten or twelve hours reaching that point, which is 400 or 500 feet lower than at the Lake ; it was an hour or two more getting down to Lyons Falls ; here it leaped down a precipice 60 or 80 feet, and almost immediately, inside of one hour, it is alleged that the effect was felt at Carthage, forty miles below, the water being upon a level between the two points. The state averred that this was impossible and preposterous. So it was absurd to contend that the flood at Watertown, which was several hundred feet below Carthage, and was not damaged until four or five hours after the mills at that



place had been submerged and washed out, had been occasioned by the giving away of the state dam. This was the superficial idea. It is what any one would say without reflection. Water must move faster down hill than upon a dead level ; all which is perfectly true. The water from the North Lake to Lyons Falls moved at the rate of perhaps two miles an hour. From the Falls to Carthage it did not move at all. It fell over the cataract at the Falls and into a basin already filled to overflowing, displacing the surface water in all directions. Let a person pour water into a vessel already full and he will instantly see the effect. It will run over the sides of the vessel. And this was the exact situation on this level. A vast body was poured into the upper end of this long level, and the effect was felt throughout the entire distance almost immediately. The entire surface was greatly excited, and wave upon wave followed each other in quick succession from the Falls to Carthage, and there passed over the state dam in such volume and with the same resistless power it possessed at Forestport. This was made so plain by the testimony of expert witnesses, who were among the ablest engineers in the world, as to leave no doubt as to the cause of the extraordinary and disastrous flood below as well as above Carthage. Hoyt & Dickerman left their tannery at the last mentioned place a little after midnight, believing that the worst had passed. The water had not risen to any extent for several hours ; but half an hour afterward it was discovered that the island upon which it stood was entirely submerged, and that the mills and manufactories in the vicinity appeared to be fast going to destruction. The same awful wave swept downward, destroying nearly everything in its path, reached Watertown four or five hours afterward, and Brownville and Dexter an hour or two later, carrying away every obstruction, and before morning had completed its all-destroying work, so that

in a few hours afterwards the water had subsided, and was not much if any higher than it had been the evening before.

A majority of the appraisers held the state liable, and accordingly awarded damages to the claimants. But the state refused to pay them, appealed them to the canal board or had them set aside, I do not remember which. Ultimately, however, it paid about half of them, and the rest are still as they were left twenty years ago. Of course flagrant wrong has been committed, for there was no more merit in the awards paid than there was in those which still remain unpaid. The fact is, that when the state conceded the justice of the claim of Hoyt & Dickerman, by consenting to its payment, it admitted the validity of all the claims for damages between Carthage and Dexter, for they all resulted from one and the same cause. Had Syracuse or Utica or Rochester been the town affected, and not Watertown, the claims would have been paid as a matter of course, but it was a new and strange thing for Watertown to be claiming damages for injuries on account of the canals, so they were contested as if they had been attempts at robbery and plunder, and only a portion of them have been paid. Had Charles A. Sherman, who had charge of the Black river claims, lived and had health, it is not unlikely that all claimants would have been paid, but he died, and a good share of the claims sleep in the grave with him.

As to the office of appraiser, the pay was only \$2,000 a year, with an allowance of \$500 for traveling expenses; but I never asked to have it raised, knowing that there were any number of men in the state quite as well qualified as I was, who would gladly have taken the place at that compensation. My democratic successors, however, did not agree with me, for when I went out of office, in 1870, the pay was made \$5,000 a year, with an allowance of \$500 for expenses, and that was the compensation of

the appraisers until the office was abolished and the court of claims established. I make this statement because the assertion has been made that I was at one time "supported by the canals" and paid a large salary; whereas I have always been under the impression that my pay was very moderate, and that it came out of the state, and not out of the canals.

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## XII.

## PERMANENTLY WITH THE TIMES.

As expected, the board of appraisers was changed early in January, (1870,) and I returned to Watertown. Mr. Ingalls was now alone in the office of the Reformer, Mr. Bigelow having been suddenly removed by death about the time I was remanded to private life. The daily issue from the office was now called the Times. Early in the spring I suggested to Mr. Ingalls that I was out of work, and disposed to return to my first love, the newspaper business.

It was conceded that I had an undefined interest in the establishment, and after a free interchange of opinions, it was settled that I should have one-third of the concern, including the real estate, for \$10,000, to pay \$6,000 in cash, and be allowed a credit of \$4,000 for my interest therein. I paid the \$6,000, and took a full covenant deed for the third mentioned. Another third was sold to Mr. Charles R. Skinner for \$10,000. I favored an arrangement of this kind, for I knew that Mr. Skinner was a good bookkeeper and accountant, and I was desirous that the doings in the different departments of the establishment should be conducted and kept in a systematic, business way, and not in the loose, unmethodical manner hitherto employed. I wanted to know whether the office was making or losing, and about how much.

My ideas in this respect were not very well carried out. The proposed system of bookkeeping did not commend itself to Mr. Ingalls. He considered the old plan the best and less expensive, and said so much about it that Mr. Skinner abandoned to a considerable extent his plans for giving the office a perfect system of accounts.

The new arrangement went into operation the first of June, 1870. Mr. Skinner took charge of the counting-room and local department, while I assumed general direction of the editorial conduct of the paper. Mr. Ingalls started at once upon a trip to California, and was absent two or three months.

From the day we (Mr. Skinner and I) went into the paper it began to improve. We gave to it new life, and the mechanical appearance of the sheet was such as to reflect credit upon the proprietors. Better type was used, and better ink and paper, and the press work was done better. The circulation of the daily, which had dwindled to 700, began to grow.

Things went on smoothly a couple of years, and until Mr. Greeley was nominated for president in 1872, by certain politicians calling themselves "liberal republicans." Against my own inclination and judgment I became connected with the movement, and occupied a position of great embarrassment, both to myself and associates, for several months. I have written up this matter at length elsewhere, and refer the reader to that article.

After election I returned to my duties on the Times. Mr. Ingalls suggested that the patrons of the paper would hardly be willing that the opposition candidate for congress should participate in the conduct of the republican Times, but I told him I could not help that; that owning one-third of the concern, I saw no reason for throwing it away. I told him I would perform such duties as my associates should direct, and went about my editorial duties as though I had been constantly at my post.

I ought to have stated in the proper place that I was chosen a school commissioner for the city in June, 1870 ; that I was made president of the board, and served six years in the office. It was while I was upon the board that the Boon street school-house was built, and the Lamon street school-house doubled in size.

In the fall of 1873 I was informed that large judgments were being obtained against Lotus Ingalls, and filed in the office of the county clerk ; and my informant said : "Brockway, you had better have your finances in a shape to purchase Ingalls' interest, which will sooner or later be in market." I did not attach special importance to what was said, but kept my funds where I could put my hands upon them in case they should be wanted.

Subsequently, Sheriff George Babbitt came into the office, and told me that he held an execution against Mr. Ingalls ; that he should have to levy upon his interest, and requested me to point it out to him. He told me he thought I had better buy it ; that Mr. Ingalls thought it would go for a small amount, in the neighborhood of \$2,000, if I remember right, and that I had better be in shape to bid upon the property. He subsequently made the levy, and I waited to see what would turn up. The interest of Ingalls was advertised to be sold the 12th of December, 1873.

A day or two previous to that date, Mr. Ingalls came into my room in the office, and told me that he supposed I was aware that his interest in the Times and Reformer printing establishment had been advertised for sale, and that he expected it would be sold as advertised. I told him I was aware that it had been advertised by the sheriff, and that was the extent of my information on the subject. He then told me he would be glad if the property could be disposed of in such a way that he could recover it after he got through his troubles. I told him that I was expecting to bid on the property, and



that should I become the purchaser, I knew of no reason why he could not repurchase it in case he should be in shape to do so. I said: "Of course there can be no understanding between us that you shall have the property back. An understanding of that kind would vitiate the sale. So, while I cannot make any agreement with you, I'll say this: should I obtain the property and you get into shape to talk business, I will do the fair thing; in other words, there will be no bars put up against your return." With this Ingalls expressed himself satisfied.

Subsequently Dr. Munson called on me, as the friend of Ingalls, saying that he (Ingalls) was anxious that the property should be so disposed of that he could ultimately recover it. I told him what I had told Ingalls, and he departed. He did ask me if I wanted any funds with which to make the purchase. I replied that I did not; I was acting for myself, and for no one else, and should use no funds not my own.

Mr. Skinner afterward inquired if I proposed to bid upon the property, and intimated that he would like to join me in the purchase; I told him I did propose to bid, and said: "If I get it we can arrange the matter to which you refer satisfactorily." As Skinner had no money, I did not care to have him concerned in the purchase. It was probably his idea that the office could go in debt to make the purchase.

The sale came off as advertised. A. W. Clark was present, and made the first bid. Then Norris Winslow became a bidder; in fact, the bidding was chiefly between him and me. He run the property up from \$2,000, the first bid, to \$3,950. I bid \$4,000, and the property was struck off to me. I paid for it the same day, and took a sheriff's deed or certificate.

This statement is made to remove any impression that may have prevailed that I gained possession of Mr. Ingalls' interest in some unfair way. Of course, I kept my



own counsel, but beyond this there was nothing that any one could complain of.

I then made an examination into the financial condition of the late firm, and found it badly involved. In fact, it owed several thousand dollars more than was due it. I next considered it important to look after Mr. Ingalls' one-third interest in the real estate. I found it was mortgaged to an insurance company for all it was worth. I bought the mortgage. In February following, I learned from Mr. Ingalls the not very pleasant fact that the real estate property, one-third of which had been deeded to me in 1870, was incumbered by a mortgage of \$1,000. Mr. Ingalls, however, added that I need not worry about that ; that he would see that it gave me no trouble.

Meantime, Mr. Ingalls was going through bankruptcy. Having got so far along that he supposed he could see through, he sent Dr. Munson to see me and ascertain upon what terms Mr. Ingalls could recover his property and resume his position on the paper.

I told him that I had ascertained there was a mortgage of \$1,000 on the real estate connected with the printing establishment, which was sold to me as being free and clear, and before anything could be done looking to Mr. Ingalls' return this mortgage would have to be paid. This done, I would be ready to talk with him. The doctor reported to Ingalls the result of the interview, at the same time telling him more than he was warranted in saying, for he informed him that he would not get back into the concern upon any terms which he would accept. And that ended all movements looking to his (Ingalls) return to the Times and Reformer office.

It is needless to say that Ingalls never paid this mortgage, and that I did. He entered the service of Brockway & Skinner a day or two following the sale of his interest, and continued in their employ until the latter part of

the ensuing summer, when he, in connection with his brother-in-law, L. R. Murray, purchased the Post, and retired finally from the Times and Reformer. He was allowed a salary of (I believe) \$15 per week, and was paid every Saturday night.

Very soon after the purchase of Mr. Ingalls' interest, T. W. Skinner, brother of Charles R., who was one of Ingalls' creditors, and likewise a creditor of his brother, began talking to me in reference to his brother's interest, saying that he and his father had advanced the money that C. R. had paid into the concern; that he had not kept up the interest; that he had given judgment for the amount due himself and father; that he saw no prospect of his ever being in a condition to meet his obligations, and he thought I had better buy his brother out. These things were said to me repeatedly by T. W. Skinner, and I finally said to him that I should not purchase the interest of C. R. until he wished to sell. Whenever the proposition should come from him I would consider the matter. I suppose T. W. kept dunning or urging his brother for pay until his patience was exhausted, and he determined to sell. At any rate, a proposition came from him after awhile, that I should take the entire concern, inasmuch as the partnership was an unequal one, I owning two-thirds and he only one-third. After looking into his affairs, I concluded to pay his obligations and let him out of the paper. He owed about \$12,000—between \$3,000 and \$4,000 was in the judgment above mentioned, and the balance was in several \$500 notes, due at intervals of six months each, and running through several years. These notes had been given to Ingalls in the purchase, and I assumed their payment. I reasoned that the concern should earn a sum sufficient to meet the obligations as they became due, and correctly, for every note was paid when due, and something more was earned. The concern, however, was badly incumbered, owing not less than \$20,000.

Thus far everything had been pleasant. I had purchased the interest of Mr. C. R. Skinner to oblige both him and his brother, especially the latter, who broached the subject to me when I had not thought of it, and continued to talk about it until the thing was accomplished. The negotiations were with both C. R. and T. W. Skinner, and in the transfer of the interest of the former the largest part of the money paid went to the latter. I supposed I was now proprietor of the entire concern. But this was a mistake. Some time later, T. W. Skinner, meeting me in the Arcade, informed me that in the Ingalls purchase I had paid nothing for the good-will, telegraphic franchise and subscription list belonging to Ingalls' third interest. I was astounded, for I really thought I had paid, or agreed to pay, a sum sufficient to be entitled to everything. I regarded the claim as absurd, and so told him. He, however, insisted that there was a claim, and, as the trustee in bankruptcy of the estate of Lotus Ingalls, he felt it due the creditors of Ingalls to save anything there might be in this line; and this after I had done everything I could to oblige him—paid \$1,000 more for the Ingalls interest than I ought to have paid, and \$2,000 more than Ingalls expected it would bring; and I paid his (Skinner) brother's obligations in full to him, and contracted to pay the remainder of his debts. I was amazed—I was indignant.

I soon after called upon my attorney, Judge Sawyer, and acquainted him with Mr. Skinner's demand. His reply was, that there was just enough of it to justify Mr. Skinner, the trustee in bankruptcy, in making me trouble. "I don't think it would amount to anything," said the judge; "but if he does not ask too much, perhaps you had better settle it. Leave the matter with me; I will see what I can do with his claim." This course I acquiesced in, and was subsequently informed that Mr. Skinner had agreed to let me off if I would pay

\$50. "And I will draw a receipt," said the judge, "that will be sufficiently comprehensive to save you further trouble." I gave my check for \$50, and the judge handed it him, and took as strong a receipt as he knew how to write. Reading it to me, the judge said: "This will probably save you a \$500 lawsuit and all further annoyance from that quarter."

But it didn't. Some time later proceedings were commenced by Mullin & Griffin, attorneys for T. W. Skinner, trustee in bankruptcy of Lotus Ingalls, charging me with sundry and divers wrongs and misdemeanors. On being shown the receipt, still in the hands of Judge Sawyer, Mr. Mullin, one of the attorneys, admitted that it appeared to preclude the possibility of recovery of damages; nevertheless, the suit went on. I believe the position was taken that Skinner exceeded his authority in giving the receipt. The case was tried before a referee, who gave judgment against the plaintiff, with costs amounting to several hundred dollars. The case was taken to the general term and the judgment of the referee affirmed. In the meantime the plaintiff had settled with the creditors of Lotus Ingalls, and had no funds wherewith to pay the costs of the suit. So an action was brought against him, and he was held to be individually liable for the costs. Then he proposed to settle, and finally an amount was agreed upon between him and Judge Sawyer, by which a portion of the costs were paid by Skinner, and I lost the balance.

I have related these occurrences, not in a complaining spirit, for they are all things of the past, but that the reader may see the trials, *legal* and other, through which I have passed, and which at times have taxed my energies to their utmost, to give the citizens of Watertown and Jefferson county a daily paper worthy of their intelligence, enterprise and push.

But is it a wonder that I have a poor opinion of the law as a means of settling differences among men? My advice to all is, to keep out of the law, if possible. Even if successful, you will be a serious loser, as I was in the case referred to. I was indeed successful in the different stages of the proceedings, but I might better have paid a thousand dollars at the outset, and should possibly have done it had I been given the opportunity, because of my repugnance to lawsuits. Men of intelligence, with a disposition to do the just thing, should be able to arrange any differences that may arise between them. The law may be well enough for lawyers, but it is bad for everybody else.

Here I close my autobiography. It is about seventeen years since I obtained complete control of the Times establishment. Under the careful management of myself and two sons, it has achieved a good degree of success, and appears to rest upon a firmer basis than at any previous period. Though recognized as the editor-in-chief, I am no longer the chief editor. My eyesight has so far failed me as to incapacitate me from reading, and I ought to stop trying to write, but find great difficulty in doing it. I realize that my newspaper work is nearly finished, but I have no reason to complain. I am possibly the oldest editor in the state, if not in the country. I have been more than fifty-six years engaged in furnishing matter for newspaper readers, and for more than fifty years have owned a newspaper either in whole or part.

I did not found the Reformer, but I believe I have had something to do with giving it life and keeping it alive. It will be forty-one years old in August, and for three-fourths of the time I have been connected with it. Hence I feel that it owes much to me for what it is.

My career, while eventful, has not been extraordinary. It had an humble origin, and I have made no very high



ascent. I have, however, been true to my convictions, and sought to do my duty in all the positions I have occupied. It is a long while since I cherished enmities toward any human being. There are those with whom I can not agree, and these I let alone. No one can love his enemies, but he can wish them no harm.

Though enjoying a fair degree of health, I understand that I am an old man. I use the term old as commonly employed. I have occupied the tenement in which I now reside a good while, and shall have to vacate the same sooner or later. When I have done so, people will say I am dead, because they have been taught to think so, and consider death a very serious matter. I do not so regard it. It is simply one of life's changes. I look upon what is termed death as the laying aside of worn-out garments, and cannot help feeling that the unseen force which animated them, which propels and guides the pencil now employed in putting these words on paper, will be provided with new and superior ones ; and that it will live on through the unending ages of eternity. So the future has no terrors for me, expecting, as I do, to resume work in the spirit world when I have reached that plane of existence ; and I trust that the progress I have made while inhabiting the mortal body will be of some service to me when I take possession of the immortal one. I cannot think I have lived wholly in vain.

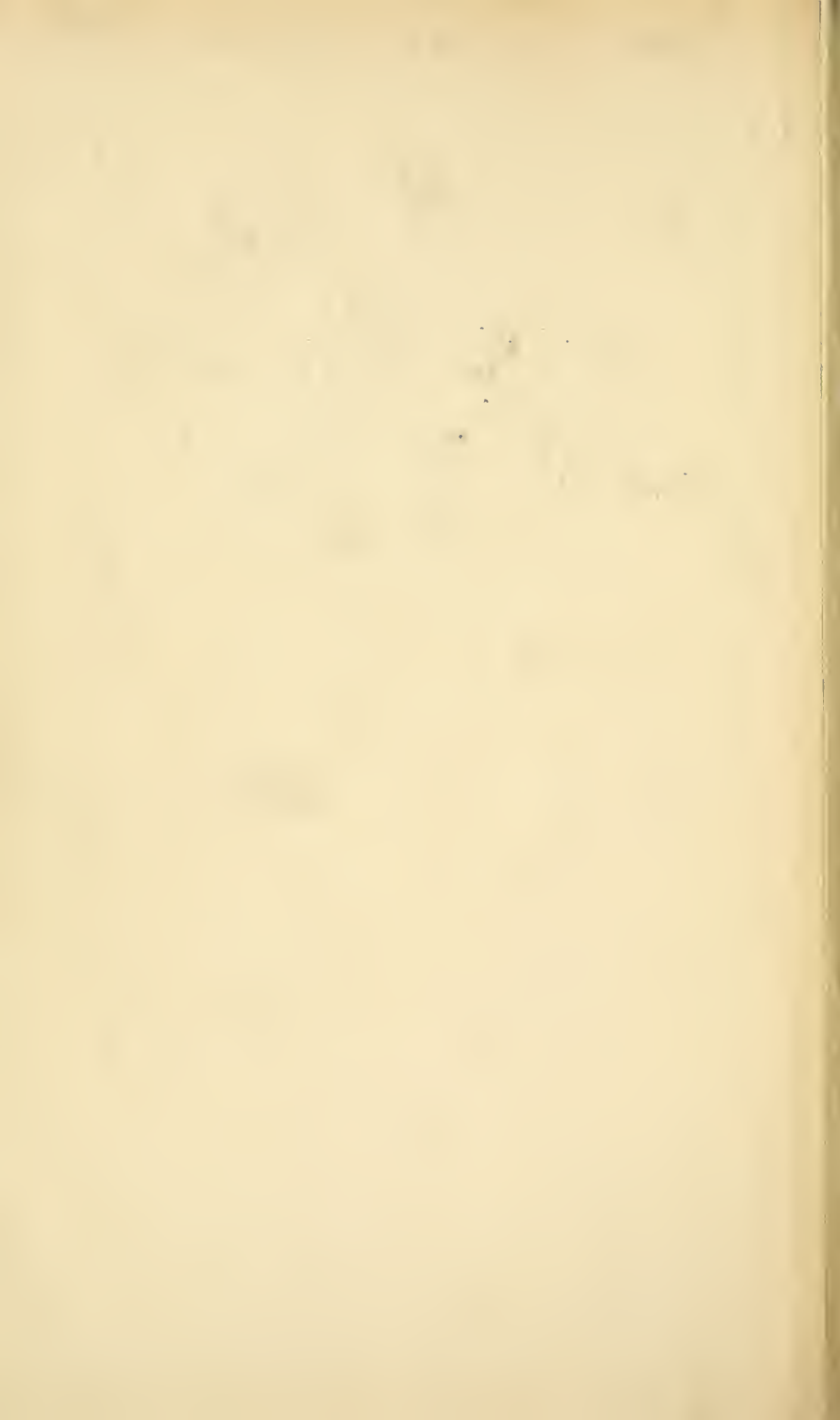












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